Older and Wiser? A Study of Senior Managers and Age

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Some text bound close to the spine.

Abstract

Employment opportunities for older adults have formed part of the UK social and legislative agenda on age for more than a decade. Research has considered organisational and employee attitudes towards age, but comparatively few studies have examined how senior managers understand and manage age. This is a surprising gap, since senior managers have a key role in the design and management of policy on age in the workplace.

This thesis critically examines literature on the context for the UK age regulations. It considers understanding of, and attitudes towards, age, age discrimination, managers' careers, and how values, organisational loyalty, and pride feature within individual managers' work experiences. Mixed methods research approaches were used to examine the views of twenty six individual senior managers in 2006, which were followed up in 2007 and 2009. Additional comparative research used WERS 2004 survey material to cross reference the findings with the wider UK population of senior managers.

The findings provide both critical and analytical insights into management attitudes towards age. These show that senior managers interpret age in the workplace through multiple social constructions. Age discrimination was widely evidenced, but ignored, or passively accepted in similar measure. Contrary to literature suggesting that older age is a time of career maintenance or decline, careers showed a high level of fluidity, irrespective of age, and required resilience.

The research results are important for organisations, advisers, and individual senior managers as they respond to the demographic, economic and legislative context within which they work. It will also to enable them to make greater organisational and individual sense of their own careers, and how they manage older employees in the workplace.

Dedication

To my devoted parents, Zygmunt and Joan Neugebauer for love, support, happiness and encouragement in learning and in life

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In the long journey in writing this paper, there are many people to whom I wish to acknowledge my thanks.

First, to those academic colleagues who have made this journey possible: for Leroy White, for the opportunity to undertake this study at Bristol University, and for his time, patience, guidance, and ideas: to my friend and colleague Sue Durbin for her encouragement, and reading drafts; Malcolm Johnson for the opportunity to discuss the wealth of research on older people; and Andrew Gustar for assistance with statistical analysis.

Second, I wish to thank the respondents in this research who, over a three year period have shared with me details of their lives, ambitions, successes, and disappointments.

And I want to thank my family – Anne, Ruth, and John – for their love, support and patience during the period of this work, and their sustained and enduring belief that, one day, it would indeed be finished!

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author

Signed *Date*

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Glossary of Abbreviations

AGE	European Older People's Platform
BERR	Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CDROMs	Compact Disc Read-Only Memory
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EC	European Community
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EHRC	Employment and Human Rights Commission
EE(A)R	Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006)
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EHRC	Commission for Equality and Human Rights
ETS	Employment Tribunals Service
EU	European Union
FTSE 100	Financial Times Stock Exchange – top 100 publicly quoted companies by market capitalization
HMRC	HM Revenue and Customs [UK]
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NAPF	National Association of Pensions Funds
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OPCS	Office for Population Censuses and Surveys

SOC 2000	Office of National Statistics Standard Occupational Classification, 2000
SPA	State Pension Age
TUC	Trades Union Congress
WERS	The Workplace Employment Relations Survey (2004)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Research Question

In spite of the published research about employee, organisational, and national responses to age in the workplace, there have been few studies of how, as individuals, senior managers understand and manage age, whilst they themselves grow older. This is a surprising gap, since senior managers have a key role in the design and management of policy on age in the workplace. This thesis addresses that gap in understanding how senior managers respond to age in the workplace. The research question addressed by this study is

How do older senior managers perceive and respond to age in the workplace?

From this overall question, two key areas emerge as the focus of this study:

Question 1: How do senior managers understand age and age discrimination in the workplace?

Question 2: What influence does age have on senior managers' own career plans and outcomes?

1.2 Why Study Senior Managers?

Senior managers were chosen for this study, because, as with any employed population, they will be potentially affected by issues of age. The Department for Education and Employment (2000) noted that line managers and co-workers had a key role in determining the experiences of older workers, and despite the complexity of the relationship, attitudes of managers and supervisors had not been fully explored in research literature (P 7). More recently, Bond, Hollywood, and Colgan (2009) noted in their research commissioned by the Equality and

Human Rights Commission on integration of employment practices on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief in the workplace that

> 'organisations felt that it was essential to have support from managers at the most senior levels in order to pursue an equalities agenda effectively' (P39).

Furthermore, senior managers themselves are expensive to recruit, train, develop, and dismiss in the case of under-performance. They are presumed to have an important role in the performance of the organisations which they represent in terms of financial impact. Finally, and in the context of the working environment, senior managers have an important role in how they perceive and lead work cultures, and develop and implement policies and procedures.

It is important that we develop our understanding of the answers to the research question, because, as this thesis will discuss:

- The UK labour force age mix is becoming older (OECD 2004, Office of National Statistics, 2004 and 2007)
- The median age of the population is expected to increase to 40 by 2033 from 35 in 1983. By that date, it is also expected that 23% of the population will be over age 65, compared with 15% in 1983 (Office of National Statistics 2010c)
- It is assumed that workforce supply will become more restricted over time, as the population becomes older, making it more important that best use is made of the total labour force available (Cabinet Office, 2000)
- Increasing life expectancy is putting pressure on pension benefits and the longer term financing of pension schemes and economic security in older age (Turner, Drake and Hills, 2006)

- The expectation of longer working lives (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010) reinforces the need for organisations to provide appropriate and effective workplace experiences for older workers
- EU (European Council Directive 2000/78) and UK legislation (Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, 2006) prohibit age discrimination in the workplace. The UK Government has since extended the scope of equality legislation, including age in the provision of services, with the Equality Act, 2010, and announced that the national Default Retirement Age of 65 will be abolished in 2011.

Becoming older and adjusting to age represents a period of adjustment both to individuals and to the organisations within which they work. These changes will impact on everyone in the course of their lives and their employment. Therefore, the imperatives for a better understanding of age in the workplace include the social impact on the individual as well as national and organisational priorities.

1.3 Personal Interest in this Study

My personal interest in this topic has developed from my practical experience as a senior human resources manager in a large organisation, and my own earlier study (Neugebauer 2004) into senior managers and age. From my managerial experience, early retirement of workers aged 50 plus was a mutually convenient method to reduce overall staff numbers. The benefit of this strategy was that the majority of workers in this age group were more than happy to leave work before their normal pensionable age of 60. For the employer, the advantage was achieving relatively painless reductions in staff numbers, with much of the cost absorbed by the then well funded pension scheme. There was also a tacitly acknowledged benefit that many of those taking early retirement, despite their long service, could now be replaced by more energetic and younger employees. For those who remained in work until normal retirement age, it was most usual practice to ensure that employees did not extend their employment beyond the

age of 60. In part, this helped to ensure that potential legal complications on retirement age and unfair dismissal claims could be avoided; it also served to make a clear policy statement that employees would not be required after this age.

But there were consequences to this approach. Age 50 became a 'watershed' age, from which job holders could reasonably expect, hope, or fear early retirement in the event of the frequent restructures which occurred. This had three observable effects. First, most managers retired in their fifties, and relatively few managers retired at the organisation's normal retirement age of 60. The second effect was that, from the age of 50, employees started to think about the prospect of retirement, some ten years earlier than the official retirement age; finally, discussions about 'becoming older' started as managers in their forties reflected on how much longer they might continue in their organisations. The overall effects of this were that the organisation tacitly discussed employees, including managers, in their mid forties as 'older', with assumptions made about their work motivation, and question marks about future promotion, compared with younger colleagues; furthermore, by retiring people in their fifties, the organisation appeared to accept the loss of five to ten years of a career and organisation knowledge and experience.

1.4 Changing Attitudes Towards Older Workers

It was not only in my own work organisation that these effects of lowering retirement ages could be recognised, but attitudes towards older workers were radically changed at government and organisation levels, especially from the end of the 1990s. At national level, the UK Government's concern about the decreasing activity of over fifties in paid occupational employment, and the higher future cost of pensions led to the publication of 'Winning the Generation Gap', aimed at improving opportunities for those aged 50 to 65. In 2000, the UK Cabinet Office observed that

> Economic restructuring and the creation of leaner firms over the past 20 years have done much to trigger the decline in job prospects of older people. But a more competitive economy does not, over the longer term, make inevitable a shortening of working lives at a time when people live and remain fitter than ever before (P3)

By 2004, a renewed focus on developing opportunities for older workers was becoming apparent, when The Economist (2004) reported that

> Ministers are seeking to use the [forthcoming] age discrimination legislation to send a clear message about the need to work longer; and quotes a partner in the actuarial firm, Watson Wyatt, who says 'the British Government is trying to torpedo the early retirement culture' (P 33)

As part of this new emphasis on longer working lives, the UK government announced in 2003 that the national minimum pensionable age would increase from age 50 to age 55, to be effective from April 2010 (HMRC 2009). At organisation level, this change was also evidenced in published research from the Nationwide Building Society. In 1996, IDS commented

> At Nationwide Building Society, where early voluntary retirement is possible from age 50, almost all employees have retired by age 60. Employment beyond the normal retirement age would only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, such as to complete a specific project or to meet a specific skill shortage. Nationwide believes that postponing retirement could lead to reduction in job opportunities for other employees (P19)

The Department for Education and Employment (2000) commented that after two decades of age focus on younger workers, the position for older workers was to

encourage the early exit of older workers. However, by 2004, Renshaw noted the efforts which organisations were now making to provide continued work opportunities for older workers, including a complete reversal of policy apparent at Nationwide

> Nationwide has a raft of diversity policies, including one for flexible retirement which allows people to carry on working until age 70(P6)

With such reversals of national and organisational policy, (Department for Education and Employment, 2000, P 6) and employee expectations of leaving working in their fifties, Dychtwald, Erickson and Morrison (2004) identified the importance of organisations learning to attract and employ older workers, just as they were learning to market products to an aging population (P 50). More candidly, they commented

> The challenge is to find a way to reconnect with these [older] employees before they are ready to take a retirement package and run (P51)

However, it was the researcher's professional experience that it was not only the employees' 'reconnection' which needed to be addressed, important as this may have been. Equally important was the attitude of many senior managers. First, was the need to reverse previous policies towards older workers. Second, to recognise that organisations themselves both reflect and contribute to society norms and values; and in UK society, attitudes towards older people were at best ambivalent, at worst dismissive, as will be explored later in this thesis. Therefore, changing attitudes towards older workers needs more than government consultative papers and changes in organisation policy – it further requires changes in beliefs and behaviours at managerial level.

Purcell and Clark observed in 2004 that whilst the aggregate national picture of the age implications may be relatively well understood, there had been little

investigation at that time of the occupational, sector, gender, or policy and practice implications (P3). In this research, a more refined understanding of an occupational group will be sought, as the paper investigates the role of a group of senior managers' attitudes towards age. Therefore, the background to what may be included or excluded in this research is extensive. To date, research in the area of age and ageing in the workplace has been relatively fragmented.

This sets the backcloth for this study. The age profile of UK workers has been affected by social, demographic, occupational and long term financial and economic impacts, and employment law. At the forefront of implementing employment policies which must recognise these new realities are work organisations, and their senior managers. But as they develop and implement new polices which promote longer working lives for employees, many senior managers do so in organisations in which, for the previous two to three decades, early retirement for older workers has been a convenient way to reduce staff numbers. Therefore, this research will seek to understand a selection of UK senior managers' attitudes towards age, ageism, age discrimination, and work commitment. The start of the research period, summer 2006, was before the implementation in the UK of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, 2006 (EE(A)R) , but after the voluntary code of practice on age, (1999) and almost six years after the European Council Directive 2000/78, which set a deadline of 2006 for governments to take action to eliminate age discrimination.

1.5 Thesis Outline

In order to explore these issues, the focal literature for this study is explored in Chapter 2. This considers the demographic background to a study of age, and the role of the manager. The chapter then explores the chosen themes of ageism, age discrimination, and career.

In Chapter 3, the research philosophy and approach are explained, as well as the rationale to use mixed methods research. Mixed research methods were used with the intention that, whilst recognising that the benefits and limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods were understood, the research conclusions could provide a richness and combination of insights through being both critical, but also analytical. The research for the study is centred on a cohort of twenty six managers (sixteen men and ten women) in the 40-60 age range, who were interviewed in depth in 2006, and whose careers have subsequently been tracked in 2007 and 2009. The research on these managers is supported by additional quantitative analysis of managers taken from the WERS 2004 survey, and quantitative analysis of age discrimination cases referred to Employment Tribunals. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the research approach.

Chapter 4 reviews the research findings in respect of age and age discrimination as experienced by senior managers. Despite the training which they have received on discrimination, and, for some, age discrimination, senior managers have a highly socially constructed attitude towards age. Those aged in their forties appeared to have a low awareness of age discrimination evidence in the workplace. The experience of senior managers in their fifties was very mixed, but a majority reported having experienced age discrimination.

In Chapter 5, research findings on the careers of older senior managers are presented. Linked with the findings on ageism in the workplace, most senior managers expressed a wish to retire or do something different in their fifties, but a minority wanted to continue their work into their sixties, or indefinitely. Most expressed themselves as committed to their career and organisation, and a minority continued to have rewarding careers. However, over the three year term of the study, the more usual experience was of planned and unplanned job loss.

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings in further detail, and considers the implications of the new insights into the role of the older senior manager which

have been evidenced from the study. It is apparent that most senior managers work within a culture of ageism. There was very limited evidence of an understanding of the business case or social justice case against age discrimination, even though some senior managers cited 'business reasons' where age discrimination occurred. The social justice and national imperatives for greater age diversity in the workplace had little consideration at this level of management. Research limitations and a personal reflection on the findings are included in this chapter. The chapter comments on how these findings contribute to previous knowledge and research about age in the workplace, and suggests areas for future research.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis. The research has demonstrated that within the research group of senior managers, age discrimination in the workplace was widespread. Age continues to be viewed in socially constructed terms, but without any evidence of informed knowledge about the benefits of older workers as part of a mixed age workforce. A majority of managers accept that their careers will not continue beyond their fifties, despite their continued commitment to the organisation, and a belief that they can still 'add value'. The chapter reflects on the implications of this thesis for future policy and practice on age in the workplace, and suggests areas for future research. Against the findings of this research, it is difficult to imagine how senior managers, with their current levels of knowledge and attitudes towards age, can be the leaders and custodians of age diversity in the workplace.

2 Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review sets the overall context for the study, and considers age and the workplace and careers, with particular reference to older workers.

Part 1 of the literature review considers the overall international context for older workers, UK experience with older workers, and then the role of the manager. In Part 2 of the literature review, age is considered, including perceptions of age, age discrimination, UK state and workplace policy on age and UK workplace practice on age. In Part 3, Careers are discussed: the literature review examines, career plateau and burnout, the psychological contract, performance management for older senior managers, career and gender, the role of commitment, values, loyalty and pride in career, and ending of career, resilience, and how these fit with concepts of career.

Part 1 Background

2.1.1 Older Workers: An International Context

Amongst countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), there has been a marked trend for older workers to leave the workforce at a younger age, and for fewer entrants to join the workforce at younger ages. For example, whilst 80% of those aged 25 to 49 are employed, the proportion employed of those aged 50 to 64 is approximately 60% (OECD, 2004). It is also apparent that, for many in the OECD, early retirement from occupational

employment is widespread, though not universally applicable across OECD countries. Hult and Edlund (2008) build on the work of De Vroom (2004) by referring to two types of age culture relevant to the workplace: the first is a late exit culture, reflecting active ageing in the workplace, and the older workers' accepted rights and duties to remain as participants in the labour force; the second is an early exit culture in which the norms of the ageing workers' rights and duties are to leave the labour market relatively early (P112). For economic, social and legislative reasons, Norway and Sweden are characterised as late exit cultures, whilst Germany and Denmark are seen as early exit cultures (Hult and Edlund 2008, P 112-113).

Since 1994, the response of the European Union (EU) has been to give increasing priority and attention to employment rights for older workers. The 1994 European Council in Lisbon took action to improve employment opportunities for older workers. Subsequent European conferences in Cardiff (1998), Vienna (1998), and Barcelona (2002) have addressed the needs of older European workers. In 2000, European Council Directive 2000/78 established a general framework for equal treatment in occupational employment, including age, and required member states to pass legislation to prevent age discrimination in the workplace. In addition, the European Council of Stockholm resolved that the occupational participation of workers aged 55-64 should be 50% by 2010, against an actual figure of 26.3% in 2000 (Taylor 2006, P3-7). Many of the trends observed in OECD and EU countries have been evidenced in the UK, with a resultant lower participation of older workers in occupational employment.

2.1.2 Older Workers: The UK Context

The research was undertaken with the emerging recognition in the UK that the average age of the workforce will increase over the next two to three decades, as birth rates decline, and life expectancy increases (Office of National Statistics, 2004). This is demonstrated in the graph below (Table1) which shows that there are two peaks of older workers, arising from two periods of baby boomer activity.

The first peak from 1945 to 1951 means that people born in these years will reach the ages of 60/65 year old retirement ages in the period 2005 to 2017. However, a second baby boom period, of longer duration than the first, occurred between 1954 and 1972. This second group will be age 60/65 in the period 2014 to 2037. Alongside these predicted peaks in people reaching retirement age, life expectancy has been steadily increasing. A 65 year old female in the UK in 2004 could expect to live a further 19.5 years, and a male of the same age, a further 16.5 years (ONS, 2007). This is good news for longevity, but added pressure on the economy if working lives are prematurely curtailed, since a smaller population of working people are supporting a higher proportion of non working people. At the same time that these age groups are reaching current retirement ages, the numbers joining the labour force at ages 20 plus are substantially lower as evidenced by birth rates of 0.7 million per annum to 0.8 million in the periods since 1981. (Source OPCS, Birth Statistics 2004).

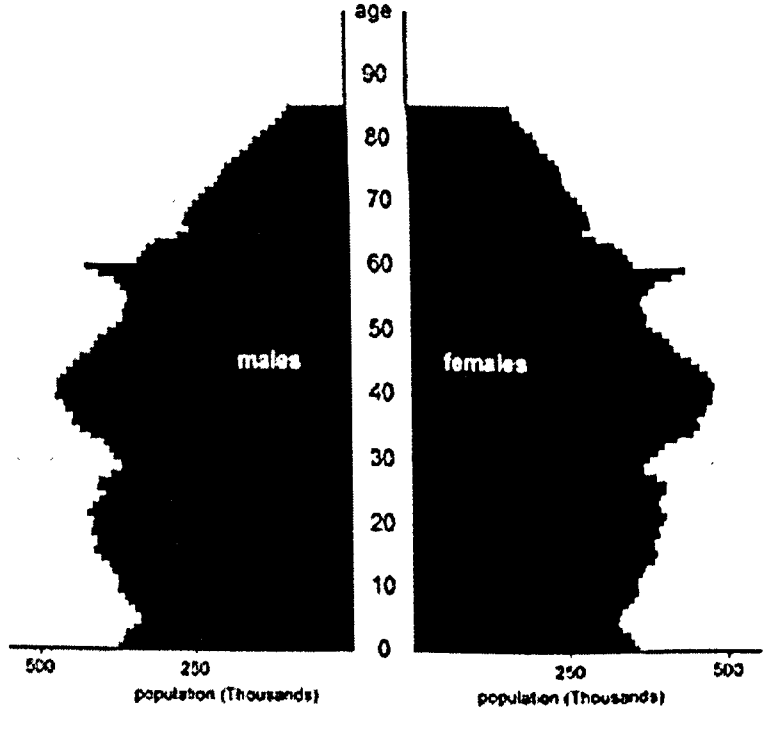

Table 1 UK Population by Gender and Age Distribution
Source: ONS 2007

This may, or may not, precipitate a serious shortage of future workers available to join the occupational workforce. If the UK requirement for labour remains

unchanged, then there is likely to be a shortage of workers for the UK economy. But it is difficult to predict labour requirements for the following three decades, especially as manufacturing and services become globalised, and when technological changes may still have dramatic impacts on workforce productivity. Furthermore, the reductions in the numbers of younger people joining the work force (down by 60,000 a year by 2010, City and Guilds, 2006) are now as likely to be counterbalanced by forecast UK and global recession and unemployment as recession leads to higher unemployment. Interviewed by Kollewe and Seager for the Guardian (2008), Nigel Meaker, director of the Institute for Employment Studies, commented

> As vacancies continue to evaporate, competition for any job available will become fierce and the existing long-term unemployed, as well as young people entering the labour market will be particularly disadvantaged

Therefore, the perceived economic imperative for engaging older workers may not yet be fully evident to many organisations; furthermore, the UK economic recession is likely to blur any short to medium term need for workforce expansion with the current (post 2008) increase in UK unemployment (ONS 2009, 2010).

However, the impact on future workforce requirements is not the only concern about an ageing population. There are economic and social concerns to care for an ageing population; to ensure that they are able to provide for themselves financially in older age; and, where it is necessary, to provide for their support and care. In spite of these needs, pension schemes to provide income in older age are under pressure. That pressure on pension schemes also comes from employers' ability to manage company salary scheme deficits. The UK Pension Protection Fund (2010) April report estimated that UK pensions had a current deficit of £74.4 billion, and that 69% of UK Direct Benefit (Final Salary) Schemes were in deficit, as a result of the fall in equity prices. Furthermore, there were signs that many UK organisations said that they could no longer afford the cost of Direct Benefit (Final Salary) schemes, when a survey by the National Association

of Pension Funds (NAPF) 2009 estimated that 52% of defined pension schemes were expected to close in the next five years. Even without these pressures on Defined Benefits Schemes, the outlook for pensions continues to be weak, with Brewster (2009) reporting 'a wave of US companies [which] are suspending payments to their staff 401K retirement plans in a bid to cut costs amid the economic downturn' (P23). It is little wonder, therefore, that the NAPF (2009) reported 'evaporation' in workers' confidence in their pension plans. Turner, Drake and Hills (2006) concluded that the long term outlook for pensions in the UK required a combination of responses: increasing the proportion of national income available for retirement pensions; an acknowledgement that voluntary private occupational pension schemes were in decline; and a gradual raising of the retirement age, in accordance with increasing life expectancy (P9-11). These developments are important, since it is assumed that ability to retire and retire early will depend on the availability of pension benefits, and that if these are not available, older workers may wish to continue to work later into their older age. In turn, this may also mean that interest in age discrimination practices is raised as older workers adjust to the need for longer working lives.

But despite this longer term outlook, labour market trends in the 1990s and at the start of the twenty first century were moving in the opposite direction, with employees leaving paid occupational employment at earlier, not later, ages. These withdrawal rates of older UK male and female workers from paid occupational employment are clearly demonstrated in Table 2, with particular downturns in occupational employment for those aged 50 and 58

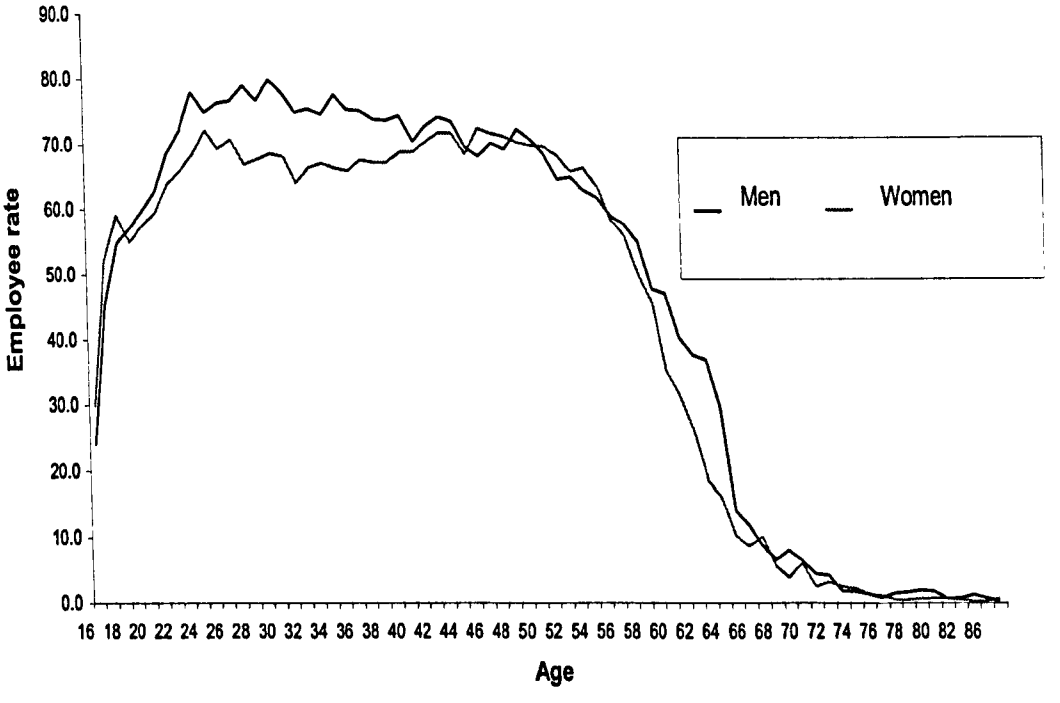

Table 2 Reduction in UK employment rates by age
Source:OECD 2004

Once a worker over the age of 50 becomes unemployed, he/she remains unemployed for a longer period than younger workers. After 12 months, the number of workers remaining unemployed was 37%, contrasted with 27% for those aged 25-49 (Labour Market Statistics, 2006). However, since 2006, there is also some emerging evidence that average retirement ages may be rising (Riach and Loretto, 2009), and that employment rates of older workers may also be increasing, especially in part time employment (Flynn 2010, P 5). Coupland,Tempest and Barnatt (2008) argued for deeper understanding and debate about increasing retirement ages, and the need for a better understanding of demographic changes, impact of UK age legislation, and the role of the age diversity business case, and the 'hidden assumptions around repositioning the individual ' (P 423).

This macro position nevertheless disguises further age based variations in the age distributions within different UK occupational sectors. For example, Table 3 below shows that 32.5 % of the workforce in the sector for Distribution, hotels, and restaurants are in the 16-24 age group, compared with a national average of 15.7%. But in the same age range, only 7.7 % are employed in the sector for Public administration, education, and health sectors. For older workers, the table also suggests that practices vary by industry type: for example, 28.5% of the workforce in Public administration, education, and health sectors are aged over 50, contrasted with a national average of 24.3%, and 19.4% in Distribution, hotels, and restaurants, and 19.7% in Banking, finance, and insurance.

Sector	Age 16-24 (%)	Age 25-49 (%)	Age 50-59 (%)	Age 60 and over (%)
Agriculture, Mining, Fishing	21.1	58.0	14.7	6.3
Manufacturing	10.4	63.7	20.1	5.8
Construction	16.9	56.7	19.6	6.8
Distribution, Hotels, and Restaurants	32.5	48.1	14.4	5.0
Transport and Communication	11.4	63.4	19.9	5.2
Banking, Insurance, and Finance	13.4	66.9	15.5	4.2
Public Admin. Education, Health	7.7	63.8	23.4	5.1
Other Services	24.2	51.9	16.4	7.5
All Industries	15.7	60	19	5.3

Table 3 Distribution of age by UK industry sector
Source: National Statistics Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2004

These differences in distribution of age range by sector may, or may not, imply different age discrimination practices. However, they suggest different interpretations of the value of older/younger workers in different industry sectors which need to be incorporated if a sufficient diversity of senior managers' attitudes is to be realised.

Guillemard, (2004) commented that the net result of these factors has been for employers, employees and their representatives to continue a system and culture where age 55 is regarded as a normal age for retirement (P 177). Moreover, this expectation leaks back to younger age groups, so that those in their forties start to be regarded as 'older' workers. Indeed, as these research findings will show, for some industries, even younger age groups may be considered too old for some appointments. Walker (2002) concludes that this leads to an age/employment paradox, of increasing life expectancy, but lower occupational employment of older workers.

Whilst the message about future changes in demography may appeal at national level, they may have little relevance for smaller businesses. Indeed, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (2007) found that 'smaller firms are relatively isolated from the current labour market and unaware of future demographic pressures' (P3). Furthermore, the DWP (2007) found mixed evidence from employers and employees about the nature and response to age discrimination within the workplace. For example, employers were found to have a generally positive view of older workers, seeing them as a positive asset (P3). However, this response was for employees already over age 60, suggesting that 'the focus over earlier exits lies at an earlier point, with those who leave through less formal routes in their mid fifties ' (DWP 2007, P3). Furthermore, the DWP (2007) found that whilst employers expressed their willingness to provide training and working patterns for older workers, employees seemed to fail to perceive or follow up on these opportunities. For the researchers in age discrimination, this leads to question why take up is low? Is this as a result of poor communication of such opportunities? Or that the opportunities are well communicated but not seen as attractive or attainable by older workers?

With these population and working trends, the EE(A)R, enacted in response to the European Council Directive 2000/78 were implemented in October 2006. These regulations made direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of age unlawful, and gave the right to continue working to age 65. Beyond age 65, workers have the 'right to request' (EE(A)R, R 47(5)) continuation of employment, but may be refused continued employment without explanation. (For a summary of these regulations, please see Appendix A). The burden of proof in age discrimination cases is for the complainant to prove the facts; and then the respondent must prove that it had not contravened the regulations (EE(A)R S 37(2)). The legislation was supported by the publication of guidance notes from ACAS ((2006) Age and the Workplace Putting the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations into Practice), and free training courses run throughout the UK for

employers by ACAS. The UK Government has extended the scope of equality legislation, including age in the provision of services, with the Equality Act 2010. Additional momentum towards organisational age diversity may also come from the review of the national default retirement age of 65 (EE(A)R R 30), due to take place during 2010 (DWP 2009 and DWP 2010), and against a call from the Equality and Human Rights Commission to abolish a mandatory retirement age completely (EHRC 2009). However, the implementation and management of policy, even when it relates to legislative change, is highly dependent on the role of the managers within organisations, which is the next focus for this discussion.

2.1.3 The Manager

The role of the manager is central within this study, so it is important both to define the role of the manager, and gain insights into how managers' roles may be defined and interpreted. Whitely (1989) points to the importance in studying the role of managers in view of the

> ...importance of management as [a] distinct economic function and as an occupational category [which] has grown considerable in the twentieth century in association with the growth of large firms and their economic influence (P210)

In this study, the role of the senior manager is underpinned by the assumption that the job holder has responsibilities for managing resources, policy development or implementation, and/or managing people. The Office of National Statistics categorises Managers and Senior Officials as one of the nine standard classifications of the ONS Standard Occupational Classification, 2000 (SOC 2000, ONS 2000, P19).

Based on evidence from the WERS 2004 Survey, Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge, (2006) note that Managers and Senior Officials

comprise 11% of the UK workforce (P24), although as will be demonstrated later, issues with the coding of management jobs within the WERS survey will mean that this figure is under-estimated. Begum (2004) suggested that 15% of the workforce in the Winter of 2003 could be classified as Managers and Senior Officials, within which 18% of the workforce were male managers and 10% women. Managers and Senior Officials tend to have higher levels of contractual tenure in their organisations than other employees, with 2% of work places offering managers fixed term contracts, compared with 30% for all occupations.

The estimated age distribution of UK managers is shown in the table below. The highest age proportion (36%) of managers is those aged 45 and above, with with 72% aged 35 and above. However, this table does not show the gender split of managers by age band, nor does it give a clear picture of the proportion of managers aged 50 and above: this is important, since, as will be shown later in this review, age 50 plus may be interpreted as particularly important in defining 'older' workers.

Age Range (years)	Percentage of UK Managers
16-24	5
25-34	23
35-44	31
45-59*/64**	36
>60*/65**	5

*Women; ** Men

Table 4 Estimated Age Distribution of UK Managers
Based on Begum (2004)

Managers' and senior officials' salaries are as shown in the table below, and continued to demonstrate the pay gap between male and female earnings.

Category	Weekly Gross Earnings (2003)	Annualised Equivalent (2003)	Author estimated annual value at Winter 2006 with 5% compound Increase
All Managers and Senior Officials	£747.50	£ 38,870	£44,997
Male Managers and Senior Officials	£816	£ 42,432	£49,120
Female Managers and Senior Officials	£577.70	£ 30,040	£34,775

Table 5 Managers' Gross Earnings
Based on Begum (2004)

The roles of the manager have been extensively researched. One of the classic views of the role of the manager is presented by Mintzberg (1975), who suggested that managers have some or all of the following roles:

Figurehead: as a representative of the organisation;
Leader: interacts, motivates, develops team members;
Liaison: networks with contacts inside the organisation, and through professional bodies;
Monitor: gathers information from within and outside the organisation;
Disseminator: communicates information to the team on a group or one to one basis;
Spokesperson: provides information to people outside the organisation;
Entrepreneur: designs and initiates change in the organisation, which may include working hours, new ways of working with processes, products, or technology;
Disturbance Handler: dealing with problems as they arise;
Resource Allocator: controls people, budgets, resources, allocation of time, etc;
Negotiator.

Mintzberg's typology, together with a wide range of other writers on management functions (eg Kotter 1982) despite their wide acceptance and use, have been critiqued in particular for the limited empirical basis for their adoption (for example Whitley, 1989 P210). In response to this, Whitley (1989) categorised managers' tasks as being characterised into five separate functions, which differentiates them from other forms of work:

- They are highly interdependent, contextual and systemic;
- They are relatively unstandardised
- They are changeable and developing

- They combine both the maintenance of administrative functions and their change
- They rarely generate visible and separate outputs which can be directly connected to individual inputs (P212)

Whitley (1989) notes that the growth of large managerial bureaucracies towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the decline of owner controlled businesses has established the role of the manager, and justifies a separate occupational status and training regime (P209). Nevertheless, familiarity with the management job title should not be misunderstood as indicating that all roles with this job title can be properly defined as management roles. Furthermore, it would be misleading to think of the management role only in the context of driving economic activity. Fondas and Stewart (1994) comment on the extent to which much research on the role of the manager reinforces the time which managers spend on inter-personal contact with other members of the organisation (P87). For example, they note that Sayles (1979) observed that

> The managerial job is a never-ending series of contact with other people'(P87).

Penrose (1980) suggested that the function of managers was to construct, maintain and improve administration systems and to co-ordinate human and material resources into productive services. Penrose (1980) also concluded that managers could be differentiated from administration roles because of the managers' ability to select and change (P68). As a result, managers' activities have economic value to reflect their role in organising and controlling resources in a systematic and cohesive manner. Even so, Fondas and Stewart (1994) commented that managerial jobs and behaviours could be 'appropriately criticised for being acontextual and atheoretical' (P83).

To focus on the people management aspects of the manager's role, Hales (2001) identifies the levels of inter-personal contact which managers have within their roles, such as acting as a figurehead, networking, negotiating with a broad constituency, directing and monitoring the work of subordinates, and specific HR activities (P50). It is through this people contact that managers, and in this case senior managers, have such a high influence on a range of work environment policy and practice, including attitudes and behaviours towards age.

In addition to their roles as resource schedulers and decision makers, managers may also be seen as a leadership function (eg Kotter, 1990). The differences between the managerial components of the role and the leadership aspects were identified by Kotter, and are shown in Table 6 below. Rost (1991) counsels against seeing the leadership role as 'good', and the managerial role as somehow 'bad', or dull. In practice, both roles must be seen as important.

	Leadership Functions	**Management Functions**
Creating an Agenda	Establish direction: Vision for the Future; develop strategies for Change to achieve goals	Plan and budget: decide action and timetables; allocate resources
Developing People	Align People: communicate vision and strategy; influence creation of teams which accept validity of goals	Organise and staff: decide structure and allocate staff, develop policies, procedures and monitoring
Execution	Motivate and inspire: energise people to overcome obstacles and satisfy human needs	Control and problem solve: monitor results against plan and take corrective action
Outcomes	Produce positive and sometimes dramatic change	Produce order, consistency, and predictability

Table 6 Leadership and Managerial Functions
Source: Kotter (1990)

More recently, Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson, Rayton, and Swart, (2003) have demonstrated the wide range of people management implications of the

manager's role, in working with human resource management policies and practices, and interaction with the employee, which are demonstrated in the table below.

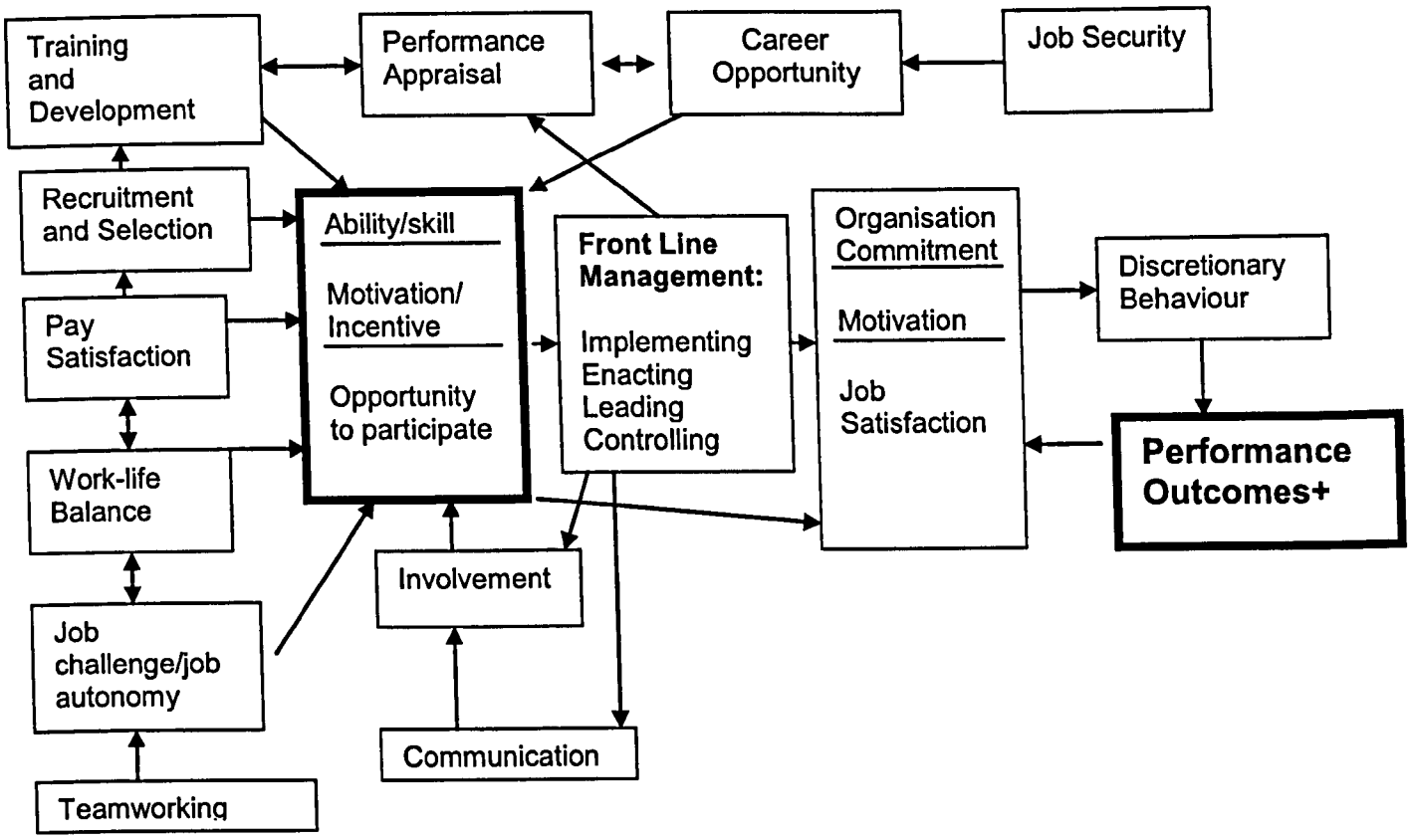

Table 7 The Bath Performance Model (Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson, Rayton, and Swart, (2003))

It is not suggested that the role of an individual senior manager could be considered as the ultimate decision maker in policy, even though the manager will often contribute to policy making discussion and enactment. Individual styles, cultures, politics and day to day pressures will influence a manager's decisions and behaviours. For example, Katz and Khan (1978), show (Table 8) that the role which top management ('organizational factors') believe they are directing to their managers are not necessarily the same as those being passed to the next levels of management, who in turn may have different interpretations on how to apply the required role in their day to day work. This is important because it introduces the issue of managers seeing their role in different ways, and having different

ways of making sense of their roles in the different environments and contexts within which they work.

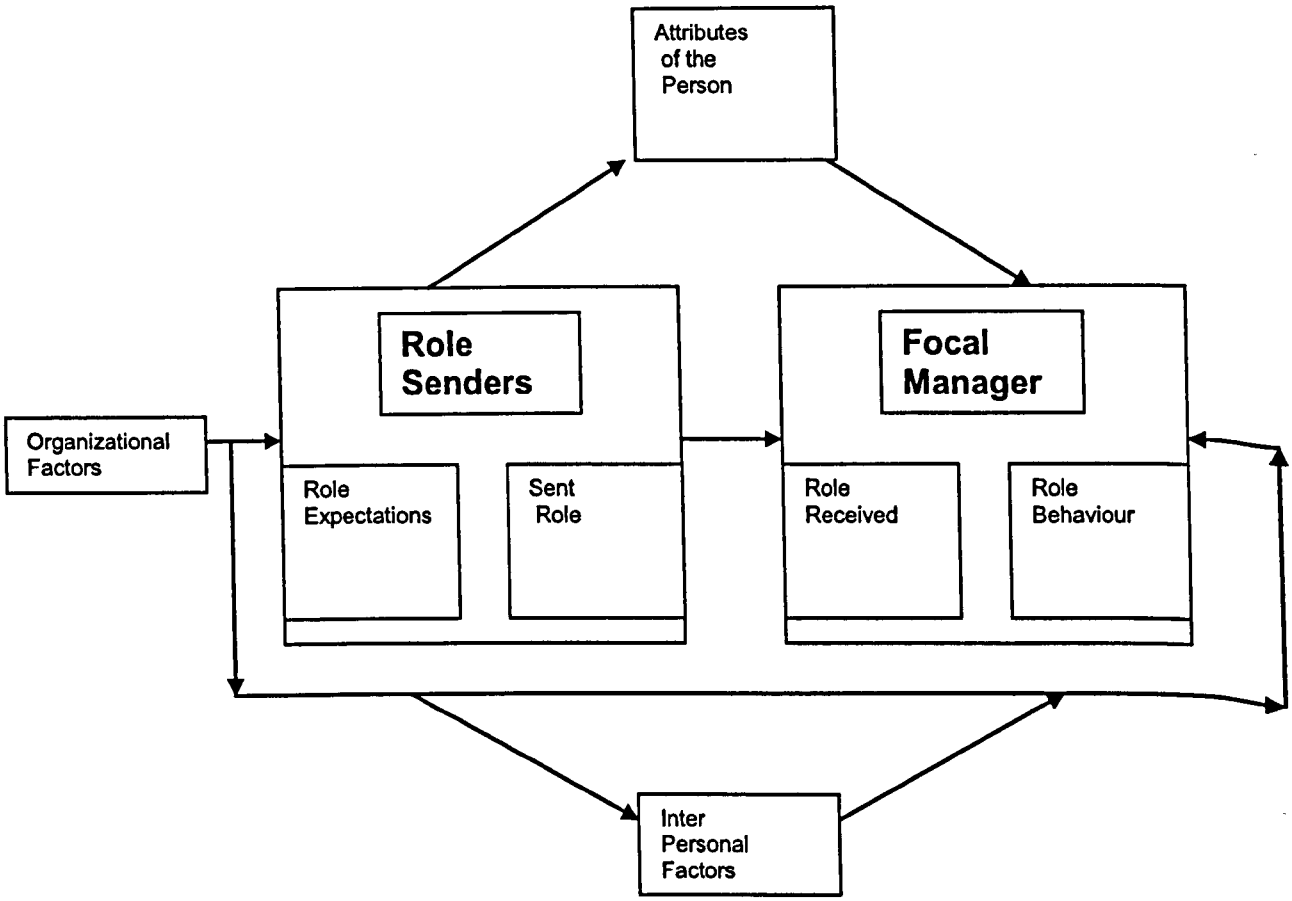

Table 8 Managers' Role Behaviours, Demands and Constraints
(Source Katz and Kahn, 1978)

Furthermore, Katz and Kahn's model (1978) helps to provide a framework to understand how policy direction (in this case, age equality, under-pinned by legislation) may still be interpreted and applied in different ways by different managers, reflecting, amongst other things, differences in attributes of the manager, as well as interpersonal factors. Support for this interpretation is found in Perrow (1986), who identifies how employees may 'construct, rearrange, single out, and demolish many 'objective features' (P192). Weick (1987) also highlights how managers may seek to modify or emphasise particular aspects of their roles (P17). It is not surprising, therefore, that Stewart (1982) comments that managers

informally negotiated areas of influence which were quite different from those set out in their formal role descriptions.

The perspectives and multi dimensional activity of managers interacting with others is widely recognised. Manz and Sims (1987) pointed to the one to one level of managerial contacts in workplace activity, and Fondas and Stewart (1994) commented that 'rarely does a study of managers not comment on the preponderance of time in interpersonal interaction' (P87). The role of the manager may be considered as role sender/role receiver (Katz and Kahn, 1978), and interacting with people both through human resource polices as modelled by Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson, Rayton, and Swart, (2003).

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A study of the role of managers' influence on age discrimination must take account of their individual roles; how they perceive and lead communications and change, and acknowledge their significant influence in leading and managing policy implementation. Furthermore, not only do they have these roles within an organisation, but organisation policies themselves give formal and informal settings for managers' interactions with other employees. Senior managers will typically both receive instructions and direction from top management, and pass on direction to subordinate managers. The thesis will review later the arguments for incorporating age and ageism in discussions about equal opportunity and diversity. In the meantime, it is worthwhile noting that not only do managers have a key role in agreeing and deploying policy on equal opportunities and diversity, but they also have a major stake in how that policy is interpreted and applied to their own circumstances.

Part 2 Different Perspectives of Age and Ageing

Introduction

This part of the chapter will discuss previous research and literature on age, by first considering individuals' perceptions of age; secondly the role of the state (UK government) and age related policy in the workplace; finally, it will review age and workplace practice.

In considering individual perceptions of age, this section of the chapter will first consider the nature of age: it will show age as not simply defined by a person's date of birth (chronological age), but how researchers and society (including media and workplaces) bring different meanings to the concept. These different perspectives of age are considered, together with the physiological and psychological perspectives of older age. The section then draws together age as a social construction and as the basis for this research. Older age related stereotypes are finally reviewed. In the second section of the chapter, the role of the state will be addressed, and the chapter will look at how age impacts on workplace policy. Finally, the chapter will explore age and the workplace practice. It will consider the response to age discrimination through Employment Tribunal experience, and conclude with an examination of the impacts on issues in the workplace experience.

2.2.1 Perceptions of Age

The Nature of Age

Since the focus of this research is on older senior managers, the first questions to address are how do we define age, and what constitutes older age? It is clear that age refers not simply to a person's chronological or calendar age. Age may be considered as that person's location in the lifecourse, defined as a sequence of age-linked transitions that are embedded in social institutions and histories

(Bengtson, Elder and Putney (2005) P493). In other words, in the context of work based organisations as 'social institutions', we must consider the attitudes of organisations, and the people who work within them, as contributing to understanding of age, together with how the individual interacts with family, labour market, and society, and how they themselves regard their own age. Therefore, age can be seen as how an individual changes over time in biological, psychological, and social functioning, and how this affects the individual at the personal, organisational, and societal levels (Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, and Dikkers, 2008, P365).

Researchers have considered a variety of definitions of age, all of which go beyond simple chronological/calendar age, so that ageing may be seen as multi-dimensional. For example, Sterns and Doverspike (1989) identified five areas in which an individual's age could be considered:

Chronological Age – based on calendar age and date of birth

Functional or Performance age – based on the employee's work performance, recognising that as chronological age increases, employees' biology and psychology change, leading to differences in health, physical capacity, and cognitive abilities

Psychosocial or subjective age – based on the individual's self perception of age, and social perception of age. Social perception reflects age norms within an organisation, profession, or wider society. Psychosocial age reflects the age when society perceives a person to be older; the social attitudes towards older workers, including stereotypes applied to older workers; and the impacts of Human Resource Management (HRM) decisions from considering an employee to be older.

Organizational Age – the aging of employees within the organisation, which may be framed as discussion about job seniority, or length of service in the organisation, where older age may be either be detrimental or positive in its effects. Organizational age may also refer to career stage (see also Chapter 2, Part 3 on careers), skill obsolescence, and age norms within the organization.

Life – span and age – consider behavioural change at any point of the life cycle, based on normative behaviours, age related biological changes, and age related environmental determinants. Life-span is also linked to life stage and family status. (P299-332)

Subsequent research on age has provided additional criteria. For Stuart-Hamilton (1991), age may be defined as: Chronological age (how old the person actually is); Threshold age (the age of onset of old age, generally accepted as aged 60-65); or Biological and psychological age (P 14-15). Cleveland and McFarlane Shore (1992) suggested an alternative framework for considering age, based on employee Chronological age, (Calendar age); Self-Perception (the individual's subjective age); Social Age (how others perceive that person's age); or Relative Age (chronological age in relation to others in the organisation). Similarly, Claes and Heymans (2008) suggested that other definitions of older age could include functional age, psychosocial age, organisational age and lifespan age.

Categorisations of age and ageing are not simply abstract: they help better to understand the complexities of understanding 'age' and 'older' in different contexts, and each definition is in some way inter-related to each other. They may, at least in part, help with some insight into the high differences in employed age patterns which was noted across industry sectors in the UK (Table 3). Age also affects individual workplace behaviours. For example, Barnes-Farrell and Piotrowski (1991) found that discrepancy between subjective age (self-perception and social age) and chronological age was related to workplace stress:

employees were likely to feel older (self-perception) where they felt higher workplace stress, but younger than chronological age where workplace stress was lower. As the chapter will continue to explore, some of the underlying assumptions in these definitions, such as the nature of performance and psychological changes in older workers, are themselves challenged in other research which will be reviewed.

Whilst some literature may focus on a variety of factors to define 'age' and 'older', other research – perhaps practically reflecting individual as well as society questions – seek to define in absolute terms an answer to the question, 'at what age is a worker...at what age am I as an individual...older?'. A starting position to respond to this question is to consider how the state defines different age stages. For example, retirement ages of 60 for women and 65 for men are the basis for UK state pensionable ages. Indeed, this reflects Stuart-Hamilton's (1991), definition of Threshold Age, the age of onset of old age, being generally accepted as aged 60-65. However, a wide range of studies, consider that to be 'older' in employment appears to come at an age less than 60/65.

Legislation against age discrimination goes some way to recognise different age stages. For example, in the USA, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act was originally introduced to protect employees in the 45-65 year age range, but subsequently reduced to 40, since 'this was the age when most expert witnesses [to the US Senate] considered age discrimination in employment became evident' (Macnicol, 2006, P235-236). In the UK, government assistance for older workers starts at age fifty with such initiatives as the New Deal 50 Plus. However, both the EU (European Council Directive 2000/78) and subsequent UK legislation (EE(A)R-see Appendix A) implicitly understand that different interpretations of age discrimination may impact in occupational employment at a range of chronological ages, and a range of different organisational settings, so no specific age for 'age discrimination' was identified.

Acknowledging that there was a social construction to defining age, Claes and Heymans (2008) worked with focus groups in Belgium to consider a range of chronological age bands (45 plus, 50 plus, and 55 plus) as identifying older age. However, the focus groups' response was that to define older age as based only on chronological age was inappropriate – first because of negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of being 'older', and second because of self-fulfilling prophecies of being labelled as 'older' (for example, employees start to see themselves as less competent). Nevertheless, having rejected an argument for defining a chronological age as 'older', they then 'recognised arguments' for suggesting that this should be age 50 plus. Their rationale to support this proposition is that Simpson, Greller, and Stroh (2002) suggested that the changes in career development and work attitudes from age 50 were different from those aged under 50; furthermore, the OECD (2004) identifies significant reductions in engagement in paid employment from age 50 (see also Table 2 To show reduction in UK employment rates by age). Other researchers have identified a different euphemism for defining age by those dissuading candidates from progressing job applications on the basis that they may be 'too experienced', or 'over-qualified' (for example, Shen and Kleiner (2001), P 28).

At a practical level, Newton, Hurtsfield, Miller, Page, Akroyd (2005) suggest that 'most people consider 'older' to be around 15 years above their current age ' (P8). This finding on the relativity of age is important in organisations which appear to have highly skewed age range distributions (see Table 3, Distribution of Age by UK industry sector), since we may expect age distributions which are heavily dominated by younger (eg, Hotels and Restaurants) or older (eg Public Sector) age groups will respond differently to the social constructs and impacts on age.

Amongst the more recent support from researchers on the belief that age 50 would define 'older' workers, Wrenn and Maurer (2004) found that US college students' beliefs about older workers were framed around those aged over 50,

(an age, presumably aligned with their parents' age, and so socialised in the home environment), a belief that learning abilities reduced above this age, and that employee capability and inclination to learn also reduced around this age. Similarly, Riach and Loretto (2009) found that a 56 year old unemployed woman was told that she was 'too old', by the Job Centre – the very people acting on behalf of the state to help her back into employment (P108).

In the case of paid occupational employment, academic researchers and the OECD tend to acknowledge age 50 as indicative of older age – despite this being 15 years before the current UK state retirement age. Even so, there is media-based evidence that organisations see older age as starting at much younger ages than 50. For example, Lewis (2005), for The Times, wrote:

> You may consider yourself young and in the prime of life. But think again if you are male and more than 45. Think again if you are female and more than 35 (P.3)

Hutton (2006) reflected a similar view, but with greater limitations on effective age ranges in some industry sectors:

> So, as far as many people in cutting edge industries - from television to software - are concerned, you are in effect, redundant by 35; only the young can have no history and so be useful (P 31)

Whilst media reports might reflect or influence some societal views, they do not represent empirical research. However, these short extracts do reflect a viewpoint on age and women in the early twenty-first century workplace. Of course, one of the challenges in defining a chronological age for the 'older' worker is that it becomes a self-serving prophecy, and that the negative stereotypes associated with older age, which will be discussed later, may be

applied without sufficient consideration of the individual's capabilities or circumstances.

Reflecting the growth of older populations in the 1960s, the study of ageing has developed in the recent four decades (Giele and Elder, 1998). For example, Riley and Foner (1968-1972, cited in Giele and Elder, 1998) rejected that the research into older age was principally about issues dealing with the end of life. Even so, the study of age in employment has been slower to engage with older age as a continued and valid period for career and development, rather than being static, declining, or withdrawing from occupational employment. For example, Taylor and Walker (1993) in a study of five European countries found 'declining labour force participation among older people, with public policies being geared primarily to the labour market exit of this group, rather than its retention' (P 36). Similarly, research in the study of careers (eg Super 1957 and Levinson 1978) have tended to see the career stages of older workers as being shaped towards decline. In the case of Levinson (1978), this conclusion was reached despite little empirical data from his research cohorts, and little evidence of enquiry or research into the possible organisational or society influences which individuals may have regarded as normative influences on their paid occupational lives.

In conclusion, it is evident that there are different interpretations about what constitutes 'age', whether from a chronological, threshold, social constructions, or biological perspectives. It is also apparent that society, the media, and occupational employment influence our beliefs about age. However, our opinion on age may be better informed with an appreciation of how age impacts on individual physiology and psychology.

Physiology and Psychology of Age

Not everyone changes physically and psychologically at the same rate. Indeed, Achenbaum (2005) suggests that old age is the most heterogeneous stage of life

> Today's generation of older workers varies enormously in physical, mental, psychological and social capabilities. Two people the same age may share no other common attribute. Such diversity has always existed across cohorts (P 25)

Central to much of the research on age (as well as career) is the concept of lifespan and lifecourse. For example, Ables (1987) sees development as a lifelong process, and that cognitive development such as 'wisdom' may develop within the lifecourse as a 'perspective for evaluating actions, setting priorities, and knowing what responses a situation requires' (P3). Reflecting also Achenbaum's (2005) view that older age is one of the most heterogeneous stages of life, Ables (1987) sees development as multi-dimensional. For example, individuals 'change at different rates, in different trajectories, and in various directions...not characterised by a single pattern' (P 4). Furthermore, Ables (1987) suggests that because development is multi dimensional, ageing is not solely biologically determined. Instead, it is complex to analyse over long periods and with different historical perspectives (P 5).

Within occupational employment, research has highlighted perceptions of ageing, which are usually, although not always, seen as negative. Langer (1982) suggests that

> 'incompetence [of older workers] may be inferred from very subtle environmental and interpersonal cues, quite independent of direct failure experiences' (P 283).

Older workers are perceived as slow, absent minded and reserved (Aaronson, 1966), and yet older workers frequently deny that age stereotypes apply to them, but do apply to others (Vincent, 1999; Ward, 1984). The effects on those who believe they have personally experienced age discrimination may include higher

levels of work continuance commitment, but also stronger intention to retire early (Snape and Redman, 2003), or, as with other forms of discrimination, lowered self esteem. (Hassell and Perrewe, 1993, P 116). But some of the research on older worker behaviour yields more mixed results. For example, Hayward, Taylor, Smith, and Davies (1997) found that older workers were perceived by 30% of their respondents as more difficult to train; by 34% as finding it more difficult to adapt to new technology, and by 36% as being too cautious. More favourably for older workers, respondents considered them to be more reliable than younger workers (79%), more productive (83%), and offering a good return on investment. A number of findings (for example, Goldstone and Jones, 2001, and Marshall, 2001) have found that even though older workers may be perceived as more experienced, mature, and stable, they were also considered to be more likely to suffer ill-health, and were slower to learn than their younger colleagues.

However, many of the social negative perceptions of older age and work effectiveness are contradicted by the facts of empirical research, which place older workers' attitudes more positively. In cognitive skills, Stuart-Hamilton, (1991) differentiates between fluid intelligence in younger age groups (defined by Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2005) as creative, flexible thinking, such as discovering the pattern in a figure sequence) and crystallised intelligence (defined as accumulated knowledge such as finding a synonym for a low frequency word, Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2005): it was found that both perspectives of intelligence were important and that whilst fluid intelligence declines from age fifty, crystallised intelligence continues to increase to age seventy (Cornelius and Caspi, 1987). Some attributes (eg verbal communication) actually peak in mid- fifties. Rhodes (1983) concluded that age rarely accounted for more than 10% variation in manual work performance – and none for clerical workers. Welford (1992, 1988, 1986, 1984) concluded that, whilst personal attributes did change with age, there tended to be compensating differences – so reduced reaction speed and eyesight could be offset by an improvement in caution, wisdom, experience, and leadership capability. Similarly, despite the

stereotypes of older people being less capable, there is empirical evidence that differences in performance between younger and older people are limited, and may even favour older workers (McCann and Giles 2002).

Research has considered whether older workers are more or less motivated in the workplace than their colleagues. Important elements to take into account include career burnout and plateau, and these will be considered later in the section on careers. Whilst there may be common perceptions that older workers are less motivated than younger workers, evidence suggests the contrary. For example, Brosi and Kleiner (1999) found older workers to be more loyal and more committed to the organisation (P101). Other studies have examined the perception that older workers are slower to embrace change. In a study of dental practitioners' response to change, Watt, McGlone, Evans, Boulton, Jacobs, Graham, Appleton, Perry and Sheiham (2004) noted that 'being older was not a barrier to change for some' (P 487). However, where older dentists were resistant to change, they justified their considerations on a perception of whether the change was actually necessary. One dentist told the research group

> I have just got to the stage in my career where I don't want to change...if things are going quite smoothly, then you don't want to change. What is the point of changing if everything is going really well? (P 488).

This could suggest that older dental practitioners use their 'crystallised wisdom' to resist change which they regard as unnecessary. Alternatively, and relevant to our later discussion on career stages, it may mean that those in the 'maintenance' or 'decline' stages of their careers (Super 1957) are in some ways complacent and therefore obstructive of the need for change. As a source of difference based on age, the research on dentists demonstrates that one person's wisdom based on experience and crystallised may become another person's interpretation of change resistance.

Life course and Generational Impacts of Age

A final area to consider is whether differences in age perceptions may be accounted for through work colleagues being of different generations, as a result of being at different stages of the lifecourse. Rhodes, (1983) argued that consideration of age in the workplace should also take account of the possible effects of 'successive cohorts bearing the stamp of their childhood environments' (P 330), rather than necessarily (or uniquely) their place in the lifecourse cycle. Different historical perspectives may also be considered within a framework of lifecourse perspectives (Bengtson, Elder, and Putney, 2005), where five lifecourse perspectives are identified: linked lives (inter-connectedness of lives and across generations): social and historical context: transition points in individual lives, and their timing relative to social context; agency, plan, and effort, ageing and human development as life-long processes, where relationships, events and behaviours of earlier life stages have consequences for later life relationships (P 494). The concept that different generational cohorts may have different attributes and preferences is recognised in research commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2008) into the potentially different generational cohort effects of

Veterans (Born 1939-1947)
Baby-Boomers (Born 1948-1963)
Generation X (Born 1964-1978)
Generation Y (Born 1979-1991)
Generation Z (Born since 1992) (P 7)

These generational differences are attributed to factors such as the social trends in raising and educating children, traumatic social events, and significant changes in the economic cycle, the influence of significant leaders, or dramatic demographical changes which impact the resource distribution in society (CIPD (2008) P 6). So, for example, Baby boomers are seen as having had to readjust

career aspirations to flatter career structures; Generation X are said to see career more as a professional ladder than a corporate ladder, and Generation Y to see career more as a scramble net than a ladder (P 9). Furthermore, intergenerational differences and (lack of) team cohesion are attributed to generational differences (P 25-27). The CIPD (2008) report also suggests that line managers need to be aware of these generational type differences so that they can manage them more effectively. However, whilst the CIPD (2008) Report is based both on a literature review, and some empirical findings, this popularised view from the professional body representing HR professionals in the UK leaves two important questions outstanding. First is to consider whether these generational categories are appropriate and empirically supported, or if they are simply reconfirming stereotypes about age bands. Second, is to consider whether, if the age related attributes do exist, is it because of the generational differences as suggested (and evidenced by Rhodes, 1983), or is a simpler explanation related to lifecourse or career stage (Levinson et al, 1978, or Super, 1957, 1984, 1990) responses?

Ebrahimi, Saives, and Holford (2008) gave wider clues about how and why generational differences between workers arise:

> A generational gap was identified between older and younger workers, with few points of common interest;
> Younger workers tended to mix with 'kindred' colleagues in the organisation to integrate into the organisation and to exchange knowledge;
> Where younger workers and older workers were brought together, it was because this was a necessity because of work need rather than inter-generational interest;
> Irrespective of organisational size, employees did not see organisations as integrating the knowledge of older workers into organisational knowledge exchange (Summarised from P135)

There are mixed results of empirical findings on the value of having different age groups working together successfully and reducing age stereotypes. Brooke and Taylor (2005) noted the 'tensions [generated] between different age groups of staff', that age segmentation was 'often subtle, unacknowledged, and unintended', that 'many managers used (some unconsciously) age stereotypes', and that 'many of these assumptions were not articulated but were covert'. For the UK organisations studied, Brooke and Taylor noted that age management was barely on the agenda, other than to channel older workers to early retirement (P425). It is not suggested here that Brooke and Taylor's (2005) work is generalisable throughout the UK. However, their research does point to the importance of the challenges of tackling age discrimination and ageism in the workplace, which goes beyond mere compliance with law and equal opportunities policies. In contrast to these apparent failures to mix generational age groups within the workplace, Maurer, Wrenn, and Weiss (2003) found that multi age groups who worked together developed positive impressions about work performance of those aged over 65. Similarly, in a study of baby boomers (born 1946 and 1962) and generation Xers (born between 1963 and 1981) in the IT industry, Davis, Pawlowski, and Houston, (2006) considered the work commitment of two separate populations of IT specialists. This research identified 'no coherent pattern of differences in work commitment between the two populations' (P 46) and that differences in managerial styles are therefore based on myths (P 47). They conclude that there were no generational differences, and that those differences which did exist were more likely to be based on 'stage of life' (P 47). However, earlier studies by Hewstone and Brown (1986) found that simply bringing groups of older and younger worker together would not be sufficient to reduce inter-group tensions and stereotypes, unless the outcomes of that working together were found to be positive.

In summary, there is not a clear-cut picture of how individuals will be affected by becoming older, underlining Achenbaum's (2005) interpretation of older age being heterogeneous, and with significant social constructs affecting how older

people are perceived, and how this impacts on them individually. Despite this diversity in the ageing process, the next section will consider ageism, where many still perceive ageing as a homogeneous experience, and linked with negative stereotypes about older people.

Drawing Together a Social Construction Approach to Age

After these different perspectives have been taken into account, it is necessary for the researcher to have a frame of reference for field research used in the study: in this thesis, that research frame will be the social construction of age. Achenbaum (2005) sees age as much more than a number, and with associated meanings and expectations about the consequences of age.

> 'Old Age', like other dimensions of the human condition, is a social construct. Men and women throughout recorded history have ascribed a plethora of positive, negative, contradictory, ambiguous and ambivalent images and ideas, attitudes, traits and behaviours in ageing-related constructs which typically correlate with the process, problems, challenges, and opportunities of growing older (P21)

Social construction resists the basis that meaning – in this case age - is, by itself, objective. Schwandt (2000) continues that knowledge cannot be seen as disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but is in some sense ideological, political, and permeated with values ' (P198, and also Rouse, 1996). Schwandt (2000) observes that

> 'We do not construct our interpretations [of knowledge] in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth' (P917).

Considering age in social construction terms mirrors earlier researcher in gender studies (for example, West and Zimmerman, 1987): here, underlying assumptions that sex and gender can be objectively and biologically determined are challenged. Instead, sex is not a biologically clear 'fact' and sex and gender can therefore both be seen in terms of social construction. So too, researchers in age (for example, Laz,1998) see difference between chronological age and social age: for example, it has already been noted that age is perceived in many different ways, irrespective of objective characteristics.

In considering age, the literature review has demonstrated how perceptions of the value and capabilities of older people have tended to be overwhelmed by negative perceptions and stereotypes of older people. Achenbaum (2005) Featherstone and Hepworth (2005) explore how social construction of age may occur, since 'Our bodies do not just age in time, in tune with the mechanisms of some inner biological clock, but are 'aged by culture' (Gullette, 2004)' (P 356). Thus, Featherstone and Hepworth (2005) point out that our perception of our bodies is affected by the 'direct and tacit judgments of others' (P356). In employment studies, researchers have similarly developed interest in both the chronology of age, and the social construction of age. (For example, Stuart-Hamilton, 1991; Cleveland and McFarlane Shore, 1992; Shen and Kleiner, 2001; Duncan and Loretto, 2004; Kooij, de Lange, and Dikkers, 2008; Newton, Hurtsfield, Miller, Page, and Akroyd, 2005.)

From an epistemological perspective, this presents the issue of how social construction may be identified in age research. Schwandt notes from Potter (1996) and Denzin (1997) that discourse is the 'material practice that constitutes representation and description' (P 197). Within this research, senior managers' social construction of age will be considered from the perspective of discourse and language used in discussing age, and analysed within perspectives of models of social construction of age in the workplace. Therefore in this research, age in the workplace will be considered from the perspective of social

construction. To support this analysis, and the different (and sometimes competing) approaches and conceptualisations of age, Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, and Dikkers'(2008) summary of perspectives of age will be used as an analytical frame (Table 9). The table is helpful in navigating how and where we may expect to see age-related issues in the workplace. However, it should be noted that neither the degree of the suggested causal links, nor the actual impact on work motivation is explained through this representation.

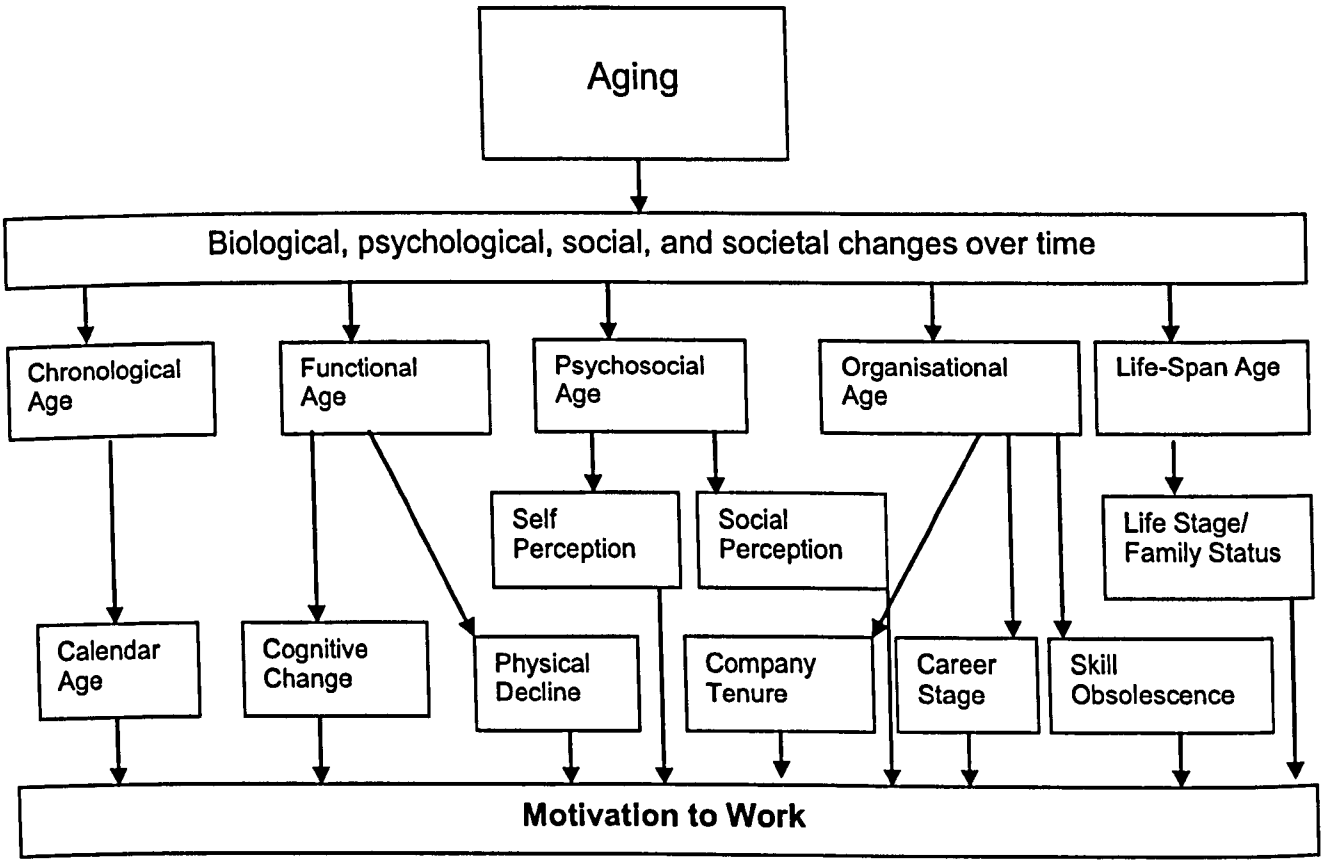


Table 9 Age Concepts and Motivation to Work
Source Kooij, de Lange, and Dikkers (2008) P370

Ageism and Stereotypes

So far, this review has discussed different interpretations of the perceptions of age. These perceptions will now be considered in the context of ageism and stereotyping. Butler (1975) describes ageism as

> A process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this for skin, colour and gender....Ageism allows the younger generation to see older people as different from themselves, thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings (P 35)

A wide range of research has supported the view that stereotypes about aging – most, but not all of which are negative - are widespread. Both younger and older people have more negative images of older people than of younger people (Nosek, Banaji, and Greenwald, 2002). A common theme through most of this literature is to observe the stereotypes, defined (Cuddy, Norton and Fiske, 2002) as

> Cognitive structures that store our beliefs, and expectations about the characteristics of members of social groups' (P4)

Stereotypes of older people are that they are less competent than younger people. McCann and Giles (2002) argue that stereotypes do not occur in isolation, but reflect stereotypes, both negative and positive, about older people which are widespread within society. Greller and Stroh (1995) found that many people look for cues and role definitions from others in society about how they should respond, and age and attitudes towards older workers were no different. Greller and Stroh (1995) proposed that older employees internalised the types of stereotypes which were appropriate for their ages and that this inevitably influenced their willingness and ability to learn, even to the extent of resistance to new challenges 'even though they would rather continue to work' (P239).

Therefore, discriminatory and stereotypical behaviour towards older workers has two potentially negative effects: first that older workers may suffer social or economic injustice, based on subjective age related perceptions, rather than objective work-related criteria; second that older workers themselves learn to accept and live according to these stereotypes, even though there may be no objective reasons for them to do so.

Levy (1996) showed that subliminally believed stereotypes of older people by older people lowered self-perception judgments and cognitive performance. This was supported by Abrams, Eller, and Bryant (2006) who found that high stereotype threat reduced the cognitive test performance of the older age groups, but where there had been previous contacts between older and younger people, this negative effect was moderated. Steele and Aronson's (1995) Stereotype Threat Theory suggests that implied or explicit inter group comparison may impair performance if there is a threat of negative stereotype of the ability of the group. Furthermore, even the knowledge that a negative stereotype ('Stereotype Threat') exists towards an individual or group is sufficient for those individuals to feel a burden of suspicion and therefore to underperform, even if the stereotype is not believed (Steele 1997). On the other hand, Contact Theory suggests that contact between groups may reduce inter group negative stereotypes (eg Allport, 1954, and Pettigrew, 1998).

Stereotypes about older people are that they tend to be viewed as less capable in cognitive skills, wordy, and irritable (Braithwaite, 1986, Coupland, Coupland and Giles 1991, Nuessel, 1982, and Gold, Arbuckle and Andres 1994). On the other hand, older people are seen as more likely to be friendly than younger people (Chasteen, Schwartz, and Park, 2002). There is extensive evidence of age stereotypes, age discrimination and ageism in the UK. As readily accessible field research on society attitudes towards age, Vincent (1999) observes that nobody wishes to be old, since the cultural devaluation of age is so strong (P 20). This is reinforced by Cockerham's (1991) observation that people acquire

negative stereotypes of aging as they themselves begin to feel threatened by older age (P 118). As evidence of society attitudes towards age, Vincent (1999) suggests a visit to the local shops, where

> 'Any browse through a birthday card shop will tell you of the disgust in which old age is held today' (P 141)

Abrams, Eller, and Bryant (2006) supported the hypothesis of Contact Theory (Allport, 1954, and Pettigrew, 1998) that positive [intergenerational] contact can reduce stereotype threat in older people. Similarly, where older people have positive beliefs about their own aging, they tended to perform better in cognitive tests than those who lacked a positive attitude about their aging (Levy and Langer, 1994; and Yoon, Hasher, Feinberg, Rahhal, and Winocour, 2000). Against the psychological and psychosocial background which has been described that many of the stereotypes and negative connotations of age have no objective foundation, these findings further suggest that effective working practices between younger and older workers are not only important, but are also attainable.

Bytheway (2005) comments that ageism is not the equivalent of sexism and racism, since there is no one group discriminating against another. Instead, throughout our lives, we are oppressed by [different] expectations about age and how we behave and relate to each other (P338). As a consequence, Bytheway observes

> A lifelong fear of the ageing process, and they underpin presumed assumptions between age and competence and the need for protection: being 'too young' and being 'too old' (P 339).

Snape and Redman (2003) concluded that being young were at least as common grounds for age discrimination as being too old. Perhaps the key difference,

however, with age discrimination of younger workers and older workers is that the passing of time will often resolve the age/experience gap for younger workers, whilst for older ones it reinforces the problem. In either case, the fundamental problem remains the same: discrimination in employment decisions which depend on the types of stereotypical thinking on age which do not relate to ultimate job performance.

Gutek, Cohen, and Tsui (1996) describe employment discrimination as existing

> When employment decisions such as selection, evaluation, promotion, or reward allocation are based on an individual's immutable characteristics such as age, appearance, sex, or skin color rather than on productivity or qualifications (P793)

Despite the breadth of this definition, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, 2006 and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guide (2006) go beyond consideration of employment decisions alone: by making age-based harassment and victimisation in employment unlawful, the statutory framework aims to make unacceptable behaviours unlawful, whether from employers, or fellow employees. Age discrimination is an issue which affects younger workers at least as much as their older colleagues. Research by the CIPD (2005) suggested that 59% of workers of all ages had seen evidence of age discrimination, with the young at least as affected as their older colleagues.

Age discrimination is costly to the economy, society, organisations and the individual. The Department of Trade and Industry (2006) estimates that the macroeconomic benefit of addressing age discrimination will be £0.7 billion to £2 billion by 2016 and that effective implementation of age discrimination legislation will increase the labour market supply by 15,000 to 29,000 employees by 2016. Compliance with UK age legislation is therefore assumed to provide benefit to employers through the wider availability of skilled workers, but failure to comply

will be costly: discrimination cases currently represent approximately 24% of the discrimination cases referred to Employment Tribunals, with typical compensation costs of £20,000 per case (Employment Tribunal Service Annual Report, 2005).

AGE (2004), commenting on the transposition of the European Council Directive 2000/78, concluded following a review of twenty six states in the European Community that

> Evidence consistently shows the presence of age discrimination in the workplace, which, if addressed, could offer opportunities for economic growth and higher levels of employment within Member States and also provide for new opportunities for individuals to secure and retain employment and consequently avoid poverty and exclusion.

Hassell and Perrewe (1993) expressed the view that, 'Many organisations profess concern about age discrimination...but individuals still behave negatively towards older workers' (P.111). Discrimination need not be only about selection, promotion, reward. Reinforcing this view, Taylor and Walker (1994) also noted reduced training and development opportunities for older workers, and that ('as for other minority groups'), older workers were seen as less trainable, less interested in developing their careers, and suitable for lower skill or lower responsibility roles. More recent research (van Veldhoven and Dorenbosch, 2008), based in Holland, found that older workers were nevertheless proactive in job orientated development, but that this tended to be self generated, rather than organisationally driven. Further research on age stereotypes in western countries including the UK, USA, Australia and Cyprus suggest that they may be regarded as resistant to change, and less alert, overall less productive in the workplace and inflexible (Perrin (2005), Taqi (2002) and Patrickson and Ranzijin (2004)). Older workers are seen as less healthy then their younger counterparts (Austin and Droussitis (2004). They may be perceived as blocking succession plans

within organisations, and so filling roles with workers are in effect stagnant (Hornstein, Encel, Gunderson, and Neumark, D (2001).

2.2.2 Age the State and UK Workplace Policy

Business case and social justice arguments for non discrimination

As part of society-wide discussion to justify the rationale for equality and/or diversity in the workplace, a 'business case' rationale has been developed, so as to emphasise the business advantages. The arguments for a diversity (non-discriminatory) business case relate to human capital considerations (including, a wider recruitment selection pool, and maximised use of a wide range of different skills and outlooks). For example, Cornelius Gooch, and Todd (2001) summarise the business case as

1. Taking advantage of diversity within the labour market, so as to reduce problems associated with recruitment difficulties
2. Maximising employee potential, so as to maximise the capabilities of diverse groups in order to maximise organisational performance, and reduce the negative impact on morale which may be caused by the perceived unfairness of prejudice and discrimination
3. Enhancing the ability to manage across cultures and borders
4. Creating opportunities and enhancing creativity, with access to new customers and new markets, accessing the knowledge of a culturally diverse workforce (P32-50)

In the case of age, the 'business case' was developed during the 1990s to include both wider pools of labour arguments, and avoiding the loss of skills to the organisation and the economy as a result of early exit (through retirement) of the workforce (Duncan and Loretto, 2004). Flynn (2010) noted that business case arguments 'dominate' (P14) in decisions about older worker retirement. In equal

opportunity and diversity, managers have a key role in the design and implementation of policy, despite the differences in the points of emphasis of these concepts. For example, Kandola Fullerton, and Ahmed (1995) argue in favour of managers adopt a managing diversity approach as more appropriate to the needs of business than equal opportunity. Furthermore, Noon (2007) sees a managerial emphasis on diversity as indicating that the value of diversity is based on it being part of a managerial agenda,

> Control of policies and practices has always resided with management, but diversity extends this to cover the discourse on equality (P775).

Significantly in this discussion about how older senior managers respond to age in the workplace, Zanoni and Janssens (2004) found that managers tended to see diversity in a very selective and instrumental fashion when managing, appointing, and determining reward, so that 'diversity discourses clearly reflect existing power relations between management and employees'(P71). At a practical level too, there is evidence that managers tend to see age discrimination as an issue for legal compliance, rather than considering the suggested business case arguments for greater age diversity. For example, the CIPD (CIPD(a) 2009) member resource page on age discrimination cites twenty two separate frequently asked questions (see Appendix K) on age in the workplace: all of these relate to questions about legal compliance, but none refer to questions about how to promote age diversity in the workplace. Dickens (1994) and Kaler (2001) see the rationale as being essentially narrow and short term in nature. By way of illustration, at national and organisational levels, there is evidence that equality and diversity are ultimately seen in economic terms. Bradley and Healy (2008) comment that 'governments may espouse an egalitarian stance, but only as long as it doesn't interfere too greatly with profits or markets' (P71). At organisational level, Coupland, Tempest and Barnatt (2008) suggested that 'for [age] discrimination to be reduced it would need to be in a climate of perceived worthwhile investment' (P 429). Similarly, Duncan (2003 and

2008) and Forbes (1996) found that any discussion of the business case for organisational age diversity would be secondary to business performance goals. These perspectives are important, in particular, with the economic experience of the final years of the first decade of the twenty first century in which increasing unemployment and worker lay–off replaced the perceived need for recruitment from a previously over-heated labour market where unemployment in May 2006 was 5.2% and had increased to 7.9% by April 2010 (ONS 2010d). Similarly, the perceived narrow business case need not necessarily embrace all types of minority group, especially if some groups are seen as less economically productive or necessary as other groups (Kirton and Greene, 2006 P203).

With these critiques of the business case against discrimination Noon (2007) argues instead that diversity/equal opportunities must be part of the broader social justice agenda. In support of this argument, Noon (2007) illustrates his argument by citing Zanoni and Janssens (2004) who found that managers used stereotypes to explain difference, and 'were interested only in how such differences could be deployed in relation to organisational goals' (P775). Noon (2007) also challenges the 'fatal flaws' of the diversity business case in ethnic minorities, arguing that the business case is short term, purports to develop an over-rational, and potentially unobtainable, cost benefit approach to diversity, is based on flawed assumptions of management rationality, and that the arguments are based on an underlying assumption that the right to fair and equal treatment needs to be justified on the contingency that equality needs to be good for business and the organisation, rather than any social justice arguments. Noon also notes that, to assume that managers will behave rationally in pursing the business case for diversity, is to ignore that managers are equally capable to react with prejudice. For these reasons, a wider interpretation of the diversity business case is required, which goes beyond legislative compliance, and considers the social, ethical, and environmental arguments, even if short term business benefits are less obvious (Dickens, 1994, and 1999).

The DWP (2007) commented that pressures to find workers with appropriate skills gaps appeared to encourage organisations (70 employers, interviewed in 2006) to adopt more age friendly HR policies. Ominously in the light of the subsequent downturn in the UK economy from late 2008, the report offered the view that

> If this apparently positive climate is to survive an economic downturn, it may be necessary to reinforce messages about age discrimination in areas like redundancy and early retirement (P3)

Why bother about age discrimination?

Despite the recognised impacts of discrimination, it does not automatically follow that all types of discrimination are, or should be, recognised as inappropriate either by society, or by law. So, in the UK, forms of discrimination such as gender, disability, ethnicity, and other forms of disability have been made unlawful by the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975, the Equal Pay Act, 1970, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the Race Relations Act 1976. Even so, why should age, which in its youthfulness, middle age, or later years, be considered as a separate reason for discrimination?

Age is a natural phenomenon. It impacts everyone irrespective of gender, ethnicity, disability, or a range of orientations otherwise considered minorities by UK law. In this sense, age is not a 'minority group' as other discrimination groups may be. Age emancipates all other groups into what has been incorporated into law since 2006 as a discrimination group. Duncan and Loretto (2004, P 97) see this emancipation as an area where anyone may be oppressed or oppressor depending on the individual's point in the lifecourse (P94). With this in mind, age may actually be considered as 'non discriminatory' - those who are younger, who may feel they are disadvantaged may be learning and growing; those who are

older have already 'had their turn', and in a variety of ways may be considered to be less deserving.

Government action to protect workers potentially discriminated against on the grounds of age may have unintended consequences: Coupland Tempest and Barnatt (2008) suggested that, whilst support for older workers, such as the UK government 'New Deal for 50 plus' helps with support and incentive for older workers, it has the paradoxical effect of presenting older workers as an homogeneous group, whose members require employment assistance, so implying that they may not be as desirable as other workers (P 428). Even so, Branine and Glover (1997) argued that the moral concern for the difficulties encountered by older workers was remarkably absent in management discourses (P237). Subsequent research (for example, Duncan and Loretto (2004) and McVittie, McKinley, and Widdicombe (2003)) suggests that age discrimination remained widespread because of deeply entrenched resistance about the business case for age discrimination, and the low impact of equal opportunity policies in supporting of older workers.

Some researchers have suggested that the move to age discrimination laws reflects concern over perceived future labour shortage, and the increasing cost of social welfare (for example, Chou and Chow, (2005) in a study in Hong Kong, and Garstka, Hummert, and Branscombe (2005), and Duncan and Loretto, (2004)), rather than concern about social justice arguments in favour of older/younger people. If this is perceived to be the case, we may expect that the adoption of age discrimination policies and practices may be slow, especially if the 'labour shortage' market argument is reversed by higher unemployment, and if the social welfare arguments are not seen as directly affecting current organisational performance.

Wood, Wilkinson, and Harwood (2008) consider the arguments for and against age discrimination and working life from the perspectives of neo-liberalism,

political economy, rights and distributive justice, and post-modern accounts (P426-431). The neo-liberal argument for age discrimination is that it 'simply reflects the higher pay of older workers, and so reducing this higher pay would resolve any employment difficulties' (P426). Linked with this neo-liberal argument is that older workers may take insecure, low paid jobs as part of lifestyle choices; or that, alternatively, employers who discriminate against older workers do so only because they do not have good information about the productivity characteristics of older workers – if employers knew that older workers could be more productive, then they would employ them. This raises the question of whether employers are either aware of the advantages of older workers and mixed age workforces, or the extent to which employers may have negative stereotypes or social construction of age and allow these to obstruct objective assessment of older workers. For example, there is extensive research (see section on Physiology and Psychology of Age) about the relative productivity of older workers, much of which is directed at supporting an interpretation that older workers are usually as productive as their younger colleagues. Similarly, the 'lifestyle choices' argument is supported by the desire for early retirement, or a phase into early retirement through part time employment or liquid careers or phased retirement programmes(see Ending of Career, below).

Neo liberals may also assume that organisations and workers make rational choices. Therefore, if older workers are paid more than younger workers, they will be less economically attractive. As a result, they are less likely to be re-engaged if they seek to re-enter the employment market (O'Boyle, 2001), need to be more realistic in their pay and reward expectations (Kotlikoff and Gokhale (1992), and even when they are recruited, the shorter period over which training costs may be recouped makes them more expensive (Neumark, 2003). Lazear (1976) suggests that employees seek to recoup the effects of being lower paid in their younger years, by being better paid when they are older. Instead, organisations may use younger employees when their pay is lower, and so avoid the costs of an older, and better paid, workforce. (Neumark, 2003, P 308).

However, these neo-liberal suggestions for resolving workplace discrimination are curiously naive: they are contradicted by evidence of other forms of discrimination, for example against women, where pay already continues to be less than that for men (Women and Equality Unit, 2007).

The second overall categorisation for age discrimination theory considered by Wood, Wilkinson, and Harwood (2008) is political economy alternatives (P428). Here, age discrimination is viewed as part of overall change within organisations, and considers issues such as culture and economic production (P428). Within the empirical research to support this categorisation, Glover and Branine (1997) found that older workers tended to be more compliant than younger workers, and so more tolerant of discriminatory practices (P285), and that since older workers were closer to retirement age than their younger colleagues, they were easier to persuade into early retirement than younger workers (Taylor and Walker,1997, P308).

In a study of the age perceptions of HR managers, Riach (2009) found that

> 'despite the bedding down of [UK] age discrimination legislation into organisational policies now underway, challenges remain maintaining a consistent mode of age diversity that translates into day to day assumptions made on the workfloor '(P331)

For Riach (2009) the challenge was how to address the 'deeply ingrained age biases' (P332) which exist in society and within the bureaucracy of the workplace. Such deeply ingrained biases also raise the question of whether and how institutional ageism may be identified. In race relations, Macpherson the term 'institutional racism' has been used to define

> 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic

> origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people' (Home Office, 1999, para 6.34)

Similarly, institutional ageism (Taylor and Walker, 1998) has been identified as resulting from a State Pension Age, which enables employers to dismiss an employee at pensionable age, irrespective of performance and capability. In fact, this thesis will provide evidence to suggest that a definition of institutional ageism may be developed which has the systemic perspective of the Macpherson definition, affecting employees much younger than State Pension Age.

As part of this study, senior managers' attitudes towards their own age, and the age of others within the workplace will be considered in order to understand management attitudes towards age, and how they too experience their own age to be perceived and understood by others.

2.2.3 Age, the State and UK Workplace Practice

Despite the support given by the UK government to the launch of the UK age discrimination law (EE(A)R), the genesis of this law is more suggestive of international action, rather than arguments indigenous to the UK. For example, The International Labour Organisation (ILO) first incorporated age as a form of discrimination in the Older Workers Recommendation (Older Workers Recommendation No. 162) in 1980. The Recommendation (ILO 1980) calls upon all member States to adopt a national policy that:

- promotes equality of opportunity and treatment for workers of all ages and take measures to prevent discrimination against older workers particularly with regard to (i) access to vocational guidance and placement services (ii) access to employment of their choice that takes into account their

personal skills, experience and qualifications (iii) access to vocational training facilities, in particular further training and retraining; and (iv) employment security.

- aims to improve the working conditions and the working environment at all stages of the working life and devise measures designed to enable older workers to continue working under satisfactory conditions. Auer and Fortuny (2000)

The ILO (1980) recommends that measures should be taken to ensure that

(i) the transition from work to retirement is gradual
(ii) retirement is voluntary and
(iii) the age qualifying a person for an old-age pension is flexible.

Furthermore, the EU formalised its concern to eliminate age discrimination with the Treaty of Lisbon (European Directive 2000/78). In contrast, the UK's response to age in the workplace emerged only gradually, and has been presented predominantly with an economic justification, rather than an equally committed social justice rationale. For example, the UK Government published 'Winning the Generation Game' in 2000, reporting on the anticipated economic and long term social impacts of the UK's changing age structure. Later reports were supplemented by detailed impact analysis and consultation by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2006. Despite this relatively slow start, the UK enacted the EE(A)R, introducing UK anti-age discrimination policy. Indeed, Bamforth, Malik, and O'Cinneide (2008) suggest that UK government reluctance to introduce age discrimination legislation reflected employers' organisations concerns about cost and complexity, and that many forms of age discrimination had historically been regarded not only as socially acceptable, but also desirable and as part of the natural cycle of the workplace (P1103).

The EE(A)R (Appendix A) stipulates that direct and indirect discrimination are unlawful on the grounds of age (EE(A)R, S3), as are instructions to discriminate

against another person on the grounds of age (EE(A)R, S5), victimisation (EE(A)R, S4), and harassment (EE(A)R,S6). Furthermore, as with other UK employment legislation, the burden of proof that discrimination has not occurred is with the organisation, once the employee has demonstrated the facts of the case (EE(A)R, S37(2)). In principle, this should mean that claimants are not dissuaded from submitting a claim under the act because of the more difficult need to prove that discrimination has occurred – instead, the proof to show that discrimination has not occurred rests with the respondent (EE(A)R S 37(2a-2b).

The EE (A) R (Schedule 6, Regulation 47) gives employees the right to request continuation of employment after the age of 65. However, employers are not required to justify the reasons for their decision in response to this right, and employees do not have the right to appeal against resulting dismissal which is otherwise procedurally correct. Flynn, (2010) suggested that the default UK retirement age of 65 is itself ageist, since it enables an employer to dismiss an employee, without explanation, solely on the grounds of age. Recognising that 'some people prefer to take early retirement, others prefer to keep working', the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (2009) announced that the default retirement age would be reviewed, during 2010 to see if was still needed. By 2010, and with a change of government, the DWP (2010) announced that the review of the default retirement age would be a consultation on how quickly (not if), the default age would be phased out. In the meantime, the age of 65 is already out of step with the conclusions of the Turner Report (Turner, Drake and Hills, 2006), suggesting a retirement age of 68 in the UK, and so leaving open the risk that future employees may be expected to work to older age, but without employment protection against dismissal.

Organisations claim to have responded to the requirements of the EE(A) R, and the Employment Trends Survey (2007) found that the proportion of organisations claiming to have amended policy and practice were as show in Table 11, as follows

Employment practices most affected by age discrimination legislation (%) (N=507 organisations)	
Retirement	67
Recruitment	37
Length of service benefits	30
Pensions	23
Risk benefits	17
Redundancy	14
Pay Structures	9
Training	1

Table 11 Percentage of organisations reporting policy and practice changes following the introduction of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, 2006
Source: Employment Trends Survey, 2007, P26

In evidence submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry in 2006, organisations have expressed a combination of policy readiness, commentary that the regulations would not go far enough or some antipathy towards the new legal requirements. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) expressed the view that making the most of employees and attracting new workers was vital to the competitiveness of UK firms and that these [age] regulations would cement changes already well under way in the workplace (P6). However, this view was not generally shared by small businesses, illustrated by one of which expressed the view that some aspects of the new law were appropriate, but that other aspects 'gave employees all the ammunition they need' (P 50).

The EE(A)R (see Appendix A for summary of provisions) were supported by an ACAS guide, (ACAS, 2006, Age and the Workplace Putting the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations into Practice), which gave detailed advice on how the new regulations should be interpreted by organisations; by a further ACAS (2006) guide; and by advertising, and free courses from ACAS. Implementation of the regulations was actively supported by Age Posi+ve (*sic*), within the Department of Work and Pensions, an organisation which provided substantial advice, best practice case studies, statistics, and research into the impacts of age and ageing

across different sectors of the UK workplace. In addition, Age Partnership Group, a body based within the Department of Work and Pensions, and whose membership and actions were endorsed by a wide range of employers' representatives, trade and professional bodies, and employee representatives, including the Trades Union Congress (TUC) ran a communications, training, workshops and information programme, under the banner of 'Be Ready'. This was supported by free CDROMs, a Personnel Organiser, and Newsletter, with extensive and practical support on how to implement successfully and lawfully the EE(A)R Age Partnership Group, 2006).

Initial take up of age discrimination cases to Employment Tribunals may be considered to be low. In 2004, Urwin argued that the multi-faceted nature and complexity of age discrimination would mean that age legislation would have only partial effects. On the other hand, whilst older workers may usually be more passive, Glover and Branine (1997) also note that they may also react from time to time with extreme conservatism of their cultural position (P277). Similarly, slow impact on other forms of anti-discrimination law have been observed; for example, Pope and Bambra (2005) failed to observe significant changes following the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, and Taqi (2002) found that age discrimination legislation had failed to have a significant impact in older worker participation rates in paid employment in other countries (2002, P 119). Berry (2005) argued that it would be some time to raise awareness of new UK age legislation, and to develop case law experience. In the first two years of the EE(A)R, Berry's (2005) slow start expectation has been reflected in the age discrimination cases referred to UK Employment Tribunals. Table 12 shows that to the year March 2007, the first six months of the operation of the new age regulations produced 972 referrals to Employment Tribunal, representing 1.1% of all discrimination cases submitted to Employment Tribunals to the period ending March 2007. However, by March 2010, age cases had increased to 5,200, representing 6.9% of all discrimination cases.

Therefore, it may be argued that there has been a slow but steady engagement with the new age regulations. One explanation may be individuals initially unaware of the age discrimination legislation or not believing that there has been age discrimination against them personally. Indeed, there is some evidence that individuals are themselves reluctant to acknowledge when they have been discriminated against. Corning, (2002) suggests avoiding questions such as 'have you ever been discriminated against?'...[since]... 'most often [this] results in a flat 'no' (P 118). Research from Gender Discrimination and Ageist Perceptions (2006) also found that individuals, especially women, were unlikely to acknowledge discrimination in quantitative research, but were more inclined to do so in face to face interviews. A further explanation is that the improvements required in eliminating workplace age discrimination have, as suggested by the CBI, already taken place, so that the need for legal claims has already been reduced through good management practices (Department of Trade and Industry, 2006). A less benign and more subtle explanation is that overt discrimination in the workplace may have been reduced in response to the training and guidance supporting the launch of the EE(A)R, to be replaced by more covert and tacit forms of age discrimination.

Furthermore, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRCb 2009), the body charged with working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society cautions advisers of potential litigants to consider carefully the effects of submitting claims to Employment Tribunals

> Litigation can sometimes even seem a little self indulgent. Certainly it may mean having to wait a long time before achieving the hoped for victory, whilst losing can be an utterly demoralising experience. Any litigant should take into account the potential stress to herself or himself (and the rest of the family), as well as making a calm and realistic assessment of the

merits of the claim. Emotions can run high in discrimination claims (EHRCb P3).

Nature of Claim	Cases Referred 2006-07	% of all Discrimination Cases (83,569) 2006- 07	Cases Referred 2009-10	% of all Discrimination Cases (75,710) 2009-10
Unfair Dismissal	44,491	N/A	57,400	N/A
Equal Pay	44,013	53	37,400	49
Sex Discrimination	28,153	34	18,200	24
Race Discrimination	3,780	4.5	5,700	7.5
Disability Discrimination	5,533	6.6	7,500	9.9
Discrimination: Religion or Belief	648	0.7	1,000	1.3
Discrimination: Sexual Orientation	470	0.6	710	0.9
Age	972	1.1	5,200	6.9
Total ET Receipts by Jurisdiction	238, 546	35	392,700	

Table 12 Submissions to Employment Tribunals, 2006-2010
Source: Derived from Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal Statistics , April 2006 to March 2010 (GB)

The challenges of submitting, even winning, Employment Tribunal cases are further underlined by Drinkwater, Latreille and Knight (2008) who noted the 'additional type of stigma' of applying to an Employment Tribunal, and participating in Tribunal proceedings (P27). Whilst this research was based on unfair dismissal claims to Employment Tribunals, the findings demonstrated that Tribunal applicants, even those who won at Tribunal, took a significant period of time to find alternative employment. Furthermore, the length of time to find alternative work, even following a successful Employment Tribunal outcome, was longest both for older workers, female and ethnic workers, and those with long term health problems, as well as for managerial and professional workers (P27).

Nevertheless, the UK government reported in 'Framework for a Fairer Future' (2008) that 62% of people aged over 50 believe that they are turned down for employment on the grounds of age (P7). Walby, Armstrong, and Humphreys, (2008) estimate from the UK Citizenship Survey, 2005, that 4.9% of the UK workforce believe that they have experienced age discrimination in the workplace, which is twice the rate estimated for sex discrimination. Based on Walby, Armstrong, and Humphreys, (2008), a 4.9% rate of the UK Workforce of 29.42m (Office of National Statistics, 2008) suggests that 1.2m UK workers will have experienced some form of workplace age discrimination.

By 2009, three years after the introduction of the EE(A)R, 2006, a significant proportion of managerial interest in age continues to demonstrate a low understanding of the law. For example, investigation of the CIPD(a) (2009) membership frequently asked questions on age (see Appendix K) suggested that HRM had gaps in their knowledge or understanding of how UK age legislation should be interpreted in the workplace. There was little interest in how age diversity could be effectively established within the workplace. Furthermore, some of the questions put to the CIPD (for example, 'can an employer exclude

older workers from benefits such as long term disability insurance?', and 'how can an employer objectively justify age discrimination?') suggest that HRM attention was as interested in how to circumvent the law, as it was in complying with it. In research with 70 organisations in the summer of 2006, the DWP found that most employers had taken action to eliminate formal age discrimination, but without significant increased recruitment of older people, so that adoption of age friendly recruitment polices had not been reflected in significant recruitment of older workers, and that 'the processes of indirect discrimination at the level of line managers may need further attention' (P3).

The CIPD (2009) found that 55% of organisations had a formal diversity strategy, although the figure for public service employees increases to 84% (P5). However, the 2009 report goes no further in understanding the qualitative impact of diversity, nor does it seek to examine diversity impacts in any significant additional quantitative manner. A similarly unconvincing case for diversity management was evident in CIPD research from 2007. Table 13 below shows that legal pressure was the key driver for organisational diversity management (68% of responses), followed by a need to recruit and retain talent. However, less than 2/3rds (63%) of organisations saw diversity as part of corporate social responsibility, and less than half (46%) did so because 'of a belief in social justice'. In other words, the perceived business case did not find strong support and the so-called social justice case (as measured by corporate social responsibility and moral argument) even less support.

Why Diversity Management? (Percentage rating of importance)

Driver	Most/very important	Important	Less/least importance	Overall rating
Legal Pressure	45	6	17	**68**
Recruit/retain best talent	30	19	15	**64**
Corporate social responsibility	30	26	18	**63**
Employer of choice	30	14	17	**61**
Makes business sense	31	14	15	**60**
Morally right	24	15	21	**60**
Improve business performance	16	15	17	**48**
Help recruitment problems	19	12	15	**46**
Belief in social justice	20	12	14	**46**
Improve customer relations	13	15	13	**43**
Improve products and service	19	13	12	**44**
Improve creativity and innovation	14	14	15	**43**
Desire to reach diverse markets	13	11	15	**39**
Improve corporate branding	12	13	12	**37**
Enhance decision making	11	15	9	**35**
Trade union activities	7	8	17	**32**
Respond to Market competition	12	10	8	**32**
Respond to global competition	9	8	13	**30**

Table 13 UK Organisations' Rationale for Diversity Management
Source CIPD (2007) N=285

Whilst human resource departments may have had a role in developing age-related equality and diversity policies, there is mixed evidence about their capability to monitor or police those polices. For example, Lyon and Pollard (1997) found that personnel departments were often unable to resist line managers' ageist behaviour (P253). Similarly, McNair and Flynn (2005) found age diversity policy may not be reflected by policies in use by line managers (P7). A suggested analytic framework for the impact of national policy on employers' attitudes towards older workers is provided by Taylor and Walker (1998), and is framed around the perceived need and orientation of age policy, the depth of commitment of employers towards older workers, the scope and coverage of HRM policy, and the role of senior management in being active or passive in older worker policy implementation.

Based on findings from WERS 2004, the application of Taylor and Walker's (1998) framework show that the evidence on how age policies are actually implemented and monitored is weak. The WERS 2004 survey was undertaken some 18-24 months prior to the introduction of the EE(A)R, 2006, but after the Code of Practice, Age Diversity in Employment introduced in 1999. When managers were asked what they most valued when filling vacancies, experience was rated as most important (86%), followed by skills (83%) and motivation (80%). Age, 18-24 was considered to be important by 16% of managers, a reduction from 22% believing age to be important in the WERS 1998 survey (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge 2006, P 236). However, the evidence that age was being managed as part of a more methodical approach to diversity/equality practices in the workplace was less compelling. It was found that 73% of UK workplaces have a formal and written equal opportunities policy, and of these, 69% included age in the equal opportunities policy. However, the results of the WERS 2004 survey showed that employers were unlikely to monitor the impacts of equality policies, and least likely to do so on the basis of age, as shown in Table 14 (Percentage of UK

Workplaces (with 10 or more employees) Monitoring Workplace Equality Policies).

	Recruitment and Selection	Recruitment and Selection Procedures	Monitor Promotions	Review Promotion Procedures	Review Relative Pay Rates
Gender	24	19	10	11	7
Ethnicity	24	20	10	11	5
Disability	23	19	9	10	4
Age	20	16	7	9	3

Table 14 Percentage of UK Workplaces (with 10 or more employees) Monitoring Workplace Equality Policies
Source: Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge 2006, P 248

At first sight, the table suggests that organisations may be more likely to develop written polices than they are to monitor their effectiveness. However, since WERS methodology is to review workplace units, rather than corporate headquarters, it is conceivable that managers at workplace level are not aware of monitoring procedures undertaken elsewhere, especially in large organisations.

Harrison (2005) highlights the 'gulf between the rhetoric and reality of managing diversity in many organisations' (P184). Pointing to the CIPD (2003) Training and Development Survey, she identifies three significant areas where organisations had underachieved in diversity management training:

- That diversity training had significantly increased in quantitative terms, but was more likely to do with legal content than with changing skills, attitudes, and emotions related to diversity;
- Little concern to look at diversity in the outside world, and especially in relation to customers;
- [Diversity learning and development] was not extensively evaluated so that its impact and value was hard to determine (P184)

Harrison's (2005) downward spiral of difference model (Appendix N) helps to illustrate how incidences of discriminatory behaviour may lead to deterioration in workplace behaviours; furthermore, she identifies that the volume of diversity training has tended to focus on legal content. However, this does not provide a theory framework to understand why learning and training on diversity law (including the training on age discrimination, which has already been discussed as part of the implementation of the EE(A)R) may still fail to eliminate work-place discrimination. Therefore, an alternative insight may be gained by considering interpretation of the 'spiral of knowledge creation' Nonaka(1994) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Here, the emphasis is on generating organisation dialogue so that both explicit knowledge (for example, knowledge of employment law on diversity), and tacit knowledge (for example, attitudes and behaviours) are brought together. This is an important consideration, since the field research for this paper will show that senior managers interviewed in 2006 were able to define age discrimination, but in many cases either failed to recognise practical examples within the workplace, or alternatively could give practical examples of age discrimination and appeared to accept this as inevitable. The research section will, therefore, suggest that explicit knowledge of age discrimination as unlawful was evidenced, but there were separate tacit understandings that ageism remained part of organisational culture or practice. In this way, Nonaka and Takeuchi's spiral of knowledge creation suggested explicit learning had been understood, but that this was not/not yet the case for tacit knowledge at the organisation or individual levels.

In the UK, therefore, a coherent pattern emerges, both from the results of the CIPD surveys, and the WERS reviews. Whilst there is increasing attention given to integrated policy process in the area of diversity, this suggests that diversity policy and interest at the organisational level is more likely to be related to legal compliance, rather than changes in culture, values, or behaviours; and that policy development and process is infrequently supported by meaningful policy review and action.

Summary on Age

Thus, there is substantial evidence of age discrimination in the workplace. However, it is less clear how age impacts on organisational policies and practices, and the role which management has in influencing attitudes, policies, and behaviours towards age in the workplace. Marshall (1998) found that management and unions in organisations rarely explicitly considered age and that where there were age related differences in the impact of organisational policy, this tended to be the result of 'unintended consequences' (P 200-202). However, earlier research from Itzin and Phillipson (1993) suggested that attitudes and assumptions held by senior and middle managers were important in determining whether and how polices and practices were implemented. Similarly, Lyon, Hallier, and Glover (1998) proposed that strategic human resource policies used by organisations tended to question the commitment of older workers.

On policy implementation directly impacting on older workers, Jolivet (2000) argued that early retirement programmes were based on the desire to maintain harmonious employment relations in organisational downsizing, rather than negative perceptions of older workers. In contrast, Le Minet (1995) suggested that exit of older workers did reflect negative attitudes towards older workers. In resourcing, Robson (2001) found that only 4% of UK organisations would recruit older workers to their organisations. More recent research has considered the negative consequences to the organisation of considering older workers as 'surpassed by technological and scientific progress' (Ebrahimi, Saives, and Holford (2008) P124): in a study of aeronautical and bio-technology organisations in Canada, they found that

> 'Ageing individuals, across their life and technical experiences, and their knowledge and contact networks accumulated with time, are very well positioned' [to capitalise on the knowledge necessary for development and competitive position in aeronautics and bio-technology] P137

Therefore, alongside the emerging importance of knowledge management and organisational learning to establish and maintain competitive advantage (for example, Drucker (2001), Epingard (1999), and Foray (2000)) there is recognition of the value and importance of older workers. Ebrahimi, Saives, and Holford (2008) see the need to operationalise these findings into organisational policy and practice, clarifying the role of older employees in the organisation, and then encompassing this with managerial style at work, learning, competences, and information systems (P137).

Different perspectives of age and ageing have been explored, and the importance attached to the social construction of age in the workplace has been underlined. Within this research, senior managers' social construction of age will be considered from the perspective of discourse and language used in discussing age, and analysed within perspectives of models of social construction of age in the workplace.

Against this overall background on age, it is now appropriate to consider occupational employment in more detail, starting with a review of how working lives are often represented, through the concept of career.

Part 3 Career

Introduction

In this part of the thesis, literature relevant to career will be examined, with particular emphasis on the relevance of career to older workers. First, will be a consideration of career and the psychological contract, including the role of performance management in the workplace.. Commitment, values, organisational values and pride will then be discussed. The concluding section of this review will consider career burnout, plateau and career ending, and discuss how these may fit together within classic career frameworks.

2.3.1 Career, the Psychological Contract and Performance Management.

An individual's relationship with the employing organisation is complex and may be viewed from a variety of different perspectives. One of these perspectives is the concept of the psychological contract. The psychological contract refers to the tacit, mental model which an employee has of expectations of the employer, and what the employee will give in return. Unlike the formal contract of employment, the psychological contract is unwritten, and has no standing in formal employment law terms. Cullinane and Dundon (2006) point out that the antecedents to the psychological contract are based on social exchange theory. However, much of the interest in the concept and development of the psychological contract is attributed to or around the work of Rousseau (for example, 1989, 1990, 1995),

Rousseau (1995) and Rousseau and Greller (1994) defined the psychological contract in terms of the employees' beliefs of what is expected of them, and what in return they may expect from the employer. It was seen as an exchange agreement between the individual and the organisation.

In the relationship between age and the psychological contract, Schein (1999, 1970) saw the terms of the psychological contract as changing over the

lifecourse: so that what an employee may seek from a job at age 25 may be completely different from the same employee's expectations at age 50. In this way, Schein's perspective of the psychological contract aligns with career life stages as envisaged by Levinson (1978) and Super (1957). The concept of a psychological work contract was referred to by Argyris (1960), Levinson (H) Price, Munden, and Solley, (1962), and Schein, 1965 and 1978. Cullinane and Dundon (2006) suggest that interest in the concept of the psychological contract really developed in the 1990s when academics and practitioners searched for new and more innovative people-management practices amidst a context of economic restructuring, heightened international competition and changing labour market dynamics (P114).

Even though there has been a wide range of research interest in the psychological contract, it does not have a single accepted definition, with the result that researchers may be discussing slightly different concepts in their findings. For example, Atkinson, Barrow, and Connors (2003) consider the implicit obligations of both parties; Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) the expectations which an individual has of employment, whilst Tekleab and Taylor (2003) emphasise the reciprocal mutuality of the contractual relationship. Reflecting on this diversity of interpretation, Guest (1998) goes so far as to describe the different interpretations as an analytical nightmare. However, one of the most serious criticisms of the psychological contract concept is that it simply is not a contract in the understood sense of explicit offer/acceptance/exchange of consideration; instead, since it is implicit on both sides, there is ample opportunity for misunderstanding between the organisation and the employee (Guest 1998, 2004, Boxall and Purcell, 2003, and Cullinane and Dundon 2006). A further criticism of the psychological contract is, even if the implicit contract were to exist between the employee and the employer organisation, who actually enacts the contract on behalf of the organisation? In the earlier discussion (Section 2.1.3), it has already been seen (for example, Katz and Kahn, 1978 and Rouleau, 2005) that the role of the manager may vary considerably, so that there may be no

consistency from managers in the 'implicit 'contract in the organisation. Similarly, Setton, Bennett, and Liden (1996) note that the variability in the social exchanges within the organisation makes for ambiguity in who represents the organisation in framing the contract, and what the implied organisation psychological contract elements actually are. The 'multiple exchanges critique' (Setton, Bennett, and Liden (1996)) has a further important dimension, since the 'terms' of the psychological contract may change if the employee changes roles, or stays within the current role, but now has a different manager with different interpretations of 'role given and role received' – therefore, we may speculate that these perceived differences may occur whilst the employee stays within the same organisation, and even without any formal changes in organisational policy.

Furthermore, the concept of the psychological contract needs to recognise that the parties to the [implied] contract have different levels of power and dependency in enacting that contract. Cullinane and Dundon (2006) further question whether managers are able to communicate the required expectation and behaviours of employees, and whether even managers commit the time and effort to recognise the promises and commitments made to employees (Guest and Conway (2002)).Intervening business pressures may require, or seek to justify, managers to change dimensions in the psychological contract, with or without employee tacit or explicit consent. Thus, Guest and Conway (2002) found that

> Senior managers responsible for relevant policy acknowledge that their organizations often fail, partially or completely, to keep their promises and commitments' (P36)

Keenoy (1997) suggests that, rather than the empirical support for the psychological contract, practitioners seem drawn to the concept because of its normative and ideological appeal. Furthermore, Cullinane and Dundon (2006) link the literature on the psychological contract to other 'contemporary

phenomena such as the knowledge worker or the new economy, both of which regularly feature in the psychological contract literature' (P124). Taken together, this leaves Cullinane and Dundon (2006) to note that the ideological appeal of the psychological contract as a 'feel good and feel powerful' message'. (P124)

Despite these many shortcomings and the complexity of the psychological contract, the concept does give valuable insights into the employee-organisation relationship, and change impacts as a result of organisation changes. Most of all, even if the psychological contract is not mutually consented to by employer and employee, empirical research on employee perceptions of the contract, and breach of contract, serve to help an understanding of the perceptions of the individual employee.

Reaction to the employee's belief that the psychological contract has been violated by the employer negatively is important because it impacts on job attitudes, which in turn has a damaging effect on job performance and satisfaction, and may lead to employee withdrawal, feelings that trust has been breached, and a reduction in the commitment to the organisation (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, and Bravo, 2007). There is evidence that events which the employee views negatively not only cause anger and frustration, but may also cause the employee to think more negatively about work, so cause further negativity in job attitudes. (Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and de Chermont, 2003).

Therefore, we see that the psychological contract is an important element in employee well being, that breach of contract leads to dissatisfaction, withdrawal, and reduced commitment from the employee, and that perceptions and reactions to breach and change in the psychological contract may change over time. In the context of studying older workers, it is therefore necessary to consider what empirical evidence exists to show the type and direction of change in psychological contract. Bal, De Lange, Jansen, and Van Der Velde (2008) summarise the literature on social exchange theory which explains why people

would respond this way. An individual interacts with other individuals because of receiving expected benefit from that individual (Gouldner, 1960, Blau, 1964). There is an expectation that mutual benefit will accrue over time; however, if this does not happen, or if there is a lack of balance in mutual benefit, then social exchange will be rebalanced through a lowering of trust from either or both parties (Taylor and Tekleab, 2004).

For older workers, there is evidence that, since they feel that time in their employed lives may be coming to an end, they tend to feel more positive about their current employer, and so try to make the approach of retirement a more positive experience (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, and Charles, 1999, and Carstensen, Fung, and Charles 2003). There is also evidence that older workers are better at managing negative events at work than younger workers (Carstensen, 2003), based on the older workers' psychological contracts being more stable than their younger colleagues (Rousseau, 2001). Furthermore, it is apparent that older workers have different psychological contracts from their younger colleagues (Anderson and Schalk, 1998). For example, it is argued that younger workers may join an organisation with higher expectations than older workers, but for older workers, these expectations are moderated gradually over time and become more realistic, so that an issue which may cause a major breach for a younger worker would be seen as less critical by an older worker (Carstensen, Fung, and Charles, 2003). What are not clear, however, are the potential impacts and consequences of a breach of trust which is rated by an older worker as being as critically important to that older worker as for a younger worker. That is to say, what is the reaction of an older worker when that worker believes that there has been a serious breach of trust from the employer?

The importance which employees attach to the perceived fairness and equity of organisational career policy was underlined by research by Herriot, Gibbons, Pemberton and Jackson (1994), who found that such features of career

management were greater contributors to satisfaction than actual or perceived career progress (P120). They concluded that

> It is clear that procedural justice and inter-personal trust regarding careers are of vital importance to satisfaction with career management and ultimately to the employment relationship itself (P120)

The effects of breach of psychological contract were measured by Bal, De Lange, Jansen, and Van Der Velde (2008), and the findings supported the hypothesis that employees perceiving a breach of the contract had reduced trust in the organisation, reduced job satisfaction, and reduced organisational commitment (P 151). Furthermore, for older workers, breach of trust was moderated compared with younger workers (P152). However, the findings also showed that where older workers did perceive a breach of psychological contract, there was a larger decrease in job satisfaction. The authors suggested a number of reasons why this might be, such as younger workers focusing more on the job itself rather than relationships with the employer – however, these interpretations were not investigated empirically. Bal, De Lange, Jansen, and Van Der Velde (2008) also considered the impacts of age and job tenure. The results showed that for breach of psychological contract in older workers, trust and organisational commitment were less affected than for younger workers; however, the opposite was true for psychological breach and job satisfaction, where older workers responded with lower job satisfaction than younger workers. (P152).

One area where organisations have the opportunity to develop a more effective psychological contract with the employee is within performance management and the subsequent opportunities of learning and development. Kersley Alpin Forth Bryson Bewley Dix, and Oxenbridge (2006) found that 78% of workplaces used performance appraisal in 2004(P87) and that 73% of managers reported regular appraisal of managers. These processes are based on goal theory (eg, Locke and Latham, 1990) and social learning theory (eg, Bandura, 1997). It is believed

that goals help to increase self efficacy and that positive feedback to goal achievement also has a motivational impact on the individual (Bandura, 1989, and Locke and Latham, 2002). An individual's contentedness is crucial to further goal commitment (Bandura 1989; and Locke and Latham 1989).

Some deterioration in goal achievement may be recognised in older workers; this may relate to younger workers' higher sense of memory control, compared with older people (Berry and West, 1993) and younger workers appear to be more likely to seek to achieve a goal, even when that goal may be difficult, or when the younger worker has had feedback which is not always positive (West, Bagwell, and Dark-Freudman, 2005). Bandura and Jourden (1991) found that positive goal feedback helped with a range of performance indicators, such as higher self-efficacy and actual performance, whilst negative feedback reduced self efficacy and overall work performance. Whilst there are some differences in the detailed results of empirical work on age and performance management. West, Bagwell, and Dark-Freudman (2005) conclude that older workers are as likely to respond positively both to goal setting and positive feedback as for younger workers.

However, the position of older workers' response to goals and feedback becomes more complex when the goal feedback is inconsistent, or where older workers were set performance goals at high, and potentially unobtainable, levels, with resultant negative performance feedback (West, Welch, and Thorn (2001)). West, Bagwell, and Dark-Freudman (2005) also found that goal progress was important for older adults but that positive feedback was not necessarily required for older adults to respond to goals. They concluded that

> It may be that, because of lower self-efficacy, older adults do not respond to neutral or inconsistent feedback in the same way as younger adults. Younger adults appear to engage the task, even with mixed feedback, but older adults respond to goals with feedback only if they are

> improving....Older adults apparently need to see definite signs of goal progress to invest in the task. (P199)

McNair and Flynn (2005) observed that whilst a sense of loyalty probably leads employers to be more lenient in the performance management of older workers, so too do those employers perceive older workers as declining in performance, and less deserving of training investment (Flynn, 2010, P7).

Linked with one of the expected outcomes of an effective performance management review, learning and development are increasingly seen as important to organisational competitiveness (for example, Epingard (1999), and Foray (2000)), with knowledge also seen increasingly as the source of organisational competitive advantage (eg Drucker, 2001). It is therefore appropriate to consider older workers' access to, and use of continued opportunities for learning and development.

In terms of responsiveness to work related learning, older employees are often perceived as being ill-equipped for the business environment. Research has frequently suggested that older workers are slow to learn new skills, and slow to change. Warr and Pennington (1993) found that older workers were regarded as slower learners across five countries in Europe. Similarly, Warr reported in 1994 that research found older workers as perceived to be slower, less interested in training, slower to grasp new ideas, less flexible, and more likely to become tired than younger workers. Capowski (1994) found that over half of businesses thought that older workers resisted training.

However, Kozlowski and Hults (1987) and more recently Meyer and Smith (2000) found that a supportive organisational climate for personal development, including for career development, were amongst the best predictors of affective commitment. In an empirical study of 395 workers in the 50-70 age range, Armstrong-Strassen and Schlosser (2008) found that organisations should

promote personal development and give work assignments which were likely to help learn new skills and develop knowledge in order to retain older workers (P432). Perrin (2005) noted that older workers often tried harder to exceed organisational performance objectives and that this factor should be considered when the cost/benefit of the costs of training older staff and lower staff turnover for older workers are taken into account.

Brooke and Taylor (2005) considered older workers in studies of organisations based in the UK and in Australia, where age friendly policies had been introduced by both governments. When learning required for the new technology was introduced, it was found that older workers were threatened by the changes (I'm just an old cow, leave it to the young ones', and 'I was unsure...nervous about learning. because of age', P420). On the other hand, younger workers adapted to the new technology more quickly and were rewarded accordingly. Younger workers recognised the 'invaluable' knowledge and experience of older workers, but also their tendency to revert to previous work practices, rather than to adopt new work routines (P 420). Younger workers promoted to supervisory positions over older workers led to tensions in workplace relationships (P 422), and older workers were more likely to volunteer for, and be offered, redundancy and early retirement, with unintended loss of skill and experience as a result (P423).

In summary, it is clear that the implications of the psychological contract and performance management need to be considered in the study of senior management attitudes to age. Breach of the psychological contract is likely to impact job attitudes, work performance, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. (In this literature review, commitment is also considered in more depth in section 2.3.3)

2.3.2 Commitment, Values, Loyalty and Pride

Work Commitment

The place of work signifies much more than an occupational location, where work and monetary reward are the only determinants. In discussing work culture, Schein (1999) observed

> Your current outlook, attitudes, and assumptions are also a reflection of your present group and community memberships, and one of the reasons you and others cling to your culture is that you do not want to be deviant in the groups that you value...No wonder it [culture] is so difficult; no wonder people resist change so much (P 64)

The themes of an emotional attachment and engagement with work, its culture, and with work colleagues, are echoed in the concept of employee commitment to the organisation: an engagement which goes beyond a rational or utilitarian engagement for the workplace. A committed employee is described (Meyer and Allen, 1997) as one who

> Stays with the organisation through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day (and maybe more), protects company assets, shares company goals and so on' (P3)

For Marsh and Mannari (1997) the committed employee

> Considers it morally right to stay in the company, regardless of how much status enhancement or satisfaction the firm gives him/her over the years (P 59)

The relevance of commitment to a study of senior managers' willingness to work, or preferring to leave/retire is underlined by Wiener, and Gechman (1977) who regard commitment behaviours as those which are socially accepted behaviours that exceed formal and/or normative expectations relevant to the object of commitment (P 48). Meyer and Allen (1997) observe that whatever the definitions or perspectives of organisational commitment, the consistent theme is a desire to describe a psychological state which characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and has implications for the individual's decision to stay with (or leave) the organisation. (P 67). Commitment may be considered from a variety of perspectives. Research has focused on emotional feeling towards the current organisation (affective commitment); the economic need and justification to remain committed to the current organisation or the profit associated with continued participation, and the 'cost' associated with leaving (Kanter 1968, P 504) (continuance commitment); and a sense of obligation to continue with the current organisation (normative commitment).

Measuring Workplace Commitment

These three components of workplace commitment can be measured by questionnaire. By using a standardised questionnaire, it is possible to analyse the research cohorts in this study, and so compare and contrast the results with a wide range of published research. For this research, the questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1993) will be adopted for the study of the twenty six older senior managers in the format shown in Appendix D.

Given the relatively small sample size, the need to extend the understanding of measures of workplace commitment in a wider comparative work groups was considered essential. For this purpose, the WERS 2004 database was used. However, there were no directly comparative questions identified for the purpose of analysis, so that the separate questions on values, loyalty, and organisational pride (Appendix H) were used, and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Research on Work Commitment

There have been many studies of some or all of the work commitment components, and their impact on work and organisational commitment. For example, there is a positive correlation between justice and fairness in organisation policy and affective commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997, P 42). Kanter (1968) considered affective orientation as an individual's fund of affectivity and emotion towards the work group (P507). Sheldon (1971) reinforced the individual/organisational link, by describing affective orientation as an orientation towards the organisation which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organisation (P 143), and Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) considered the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, an organisation (P27).

Some work has sought to link other attributes with affective commitment. For example, Buchanan (1974) links work ethic and need for achievement with stronger affective commitment. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) also find some evidence that self perception of individual competence may correlate with affective commitment. On the other hand, Meyer and Allen (1997) failed to establish a consistent link between either marital status or educational attainment with affective commitment. Similarly, neither does gender (Meyer and Allen, 1997), nor growing older appear to establish a reliable link with affective commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). The issue of age as a possible factor in affective commitment is, as Meyer and Allen (1997) commented, additionally difficult to establish, in view of the difficulty of separating age as a factor from other differences which may be attributable to inter-generational differences in work experience, and the fact that older people may have more positive experiences of work.

Much of the research on commitment and work has focused on affective commitment, rather than the continuance and normative commitment. For example, when an individual's role in the organisation is ambiguous, low affective commitment has been observed (Meyer and Allen, 1997), but role clarity is positively correlated with higher affective commitment. Similarly, where there are good inter-personal relationships with the individual's immediate manager, affective commitment is stronger. Such good relations would be evidenced by fair policies (Gellatly, 1995), and being treated fairly and with consideration when decisions are being made (Jermier and Berkes, 1979; and Rhodes and Steers, 1981).

Meyer and Allen (1997) summarise why employee experience of being treated fairly is so important, in that it

> Communicate[s] that the organization is supportive of its employees, treats them fairly, and enhances their sense of personal importance and competence by appearing to value their contributions to the organization (P 46).

Armstrong-Strassen and Schlosser (2008) suggested in empirical research based on 395 people, aged 50-70, that affective commitment could conceptually fit within employees' work commitment as shown in Table 15. Here, work centrality is defined as 'the overall importance of work in a person's life.

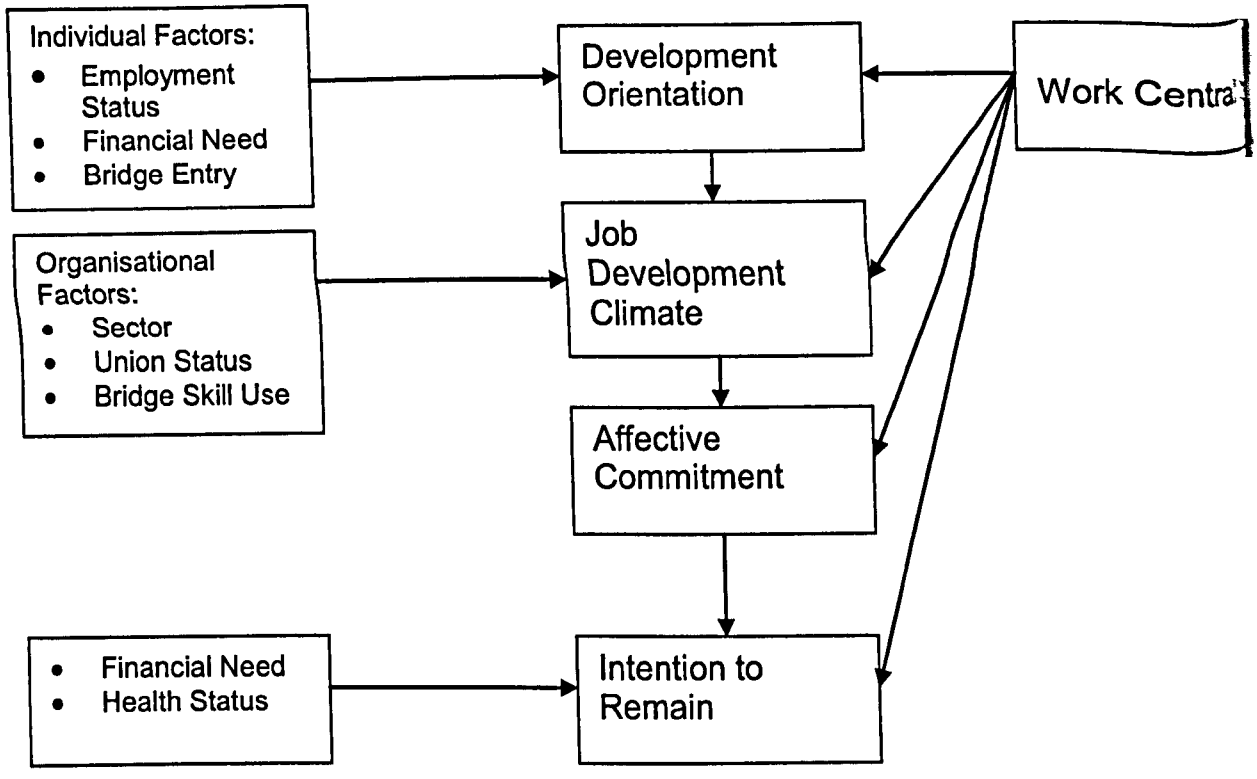


Table 15 Organisational Development Climate Model
Source Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2008), P421,430,432

Research has also sought to establish the linkage between commitment and intended turnover, and actual turnover. For example, Allen and Meyer (1996), Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Tett and Meyer (1993) found that the variations in commitment could predict variations in turnover, with the strongest relationship between weaker affective commitment, and actual turnover (Mayer and Allen, 1997, P 26). However, this is not to suggest that high affective commitment and low turnover should be organisational goals in themselves, since high work performance is also important. More recently, the research on the psychological process leading to an employee wishing to leave an organisation does not yet provide a clear framework (Cole and Bruch, 2006; Steel, 2002; van Dick, 2004). Little wonder, therefore, that Crown (1996) highlighted the additional complexity of predicting why, how, and when an employee may seek to retire.

Even so, research on intention to stay in the organisation, or to leave, has yielded some thought-provoking results. There is evidence that employees who are regarded as promotable in the future are more likely to remain in the organisation, and to be committed. For example, Robertson, Iles, Gratton, and Sharpley (1991) found that prospective managers in a financial services company were more likely to stay, and remain committed, if they were selected as future promotion material, whilst those not considered promotable became less committed and considered seeking work elsewhere. In contrast, Fletcher (1991) found little difference in candidate commitment following assessments in a bank, although self-esteem of candidates not affected for longer term promotion was reduced: Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest that this intention from both successful and unsuccessful candidates to remain in the organisation may reflect candidate perception of the assessment processes as being fair (P 76).

In considering organisational commitment, Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, and Jackson (1989) noted that where managers were rated as not promotable by their superiors, continuance commitment actually increased. Whilst it might be assumed that affective commitment reduced, the challenge to organisations was that these employees appeared to be even more motivated to remain in the organisation, since they felt less able to find a job externally. The danger, therefore, is that organisations may find such employees less willing or confident to seek jobs elsewhere, and yet have become less motivated with their organisational roles. Snape and Redman (2003) also found older workers had higher continuance commitment. There is an important leadership challenge for organisations in these findings: how to continue to motivate employees who now believe themselves to be locked in to their current organisations as a result of continuance commitment, but who may have substantially reduced affective or normative commitment. For the individual employee, the challenge is to find new meaning and ways of feeling valued in the work setting, especially as working lives lengthen. During the field work research with senior managers, special attention will be made to measuring convergence or divergence of the three

elements of commitment, and their narrative stories to assess what impact this may have had on self belief, self esteem, and work motivation.

Commitment and Organisational Identity

Organisational identification describes the manner in which individuals define themselves in terms of membership of an organisation (Cole and Bruch, 2006; Mael and Ashforth, 1995). Cole and Bruch (2006) reinforce that strong organisational identity, identification, and commitment influence employee decisions on whether to remain in the organisation. Therefore, where employee/organisational identification is reinforced by

> Honouring the organisation's traditions, rituals, and ceremonies that communicate and objectify the organisation's history

Emphasising core values, beliefs, and behaviours which represent the organisation mission and goals, Cole and Bruch (2006) see a process whereby an individual's identity becomes psychologically intertwined with the organisation's identity, and organisational commitment. To date, however, there has been little consensus (Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton, 2000) on different definitions for organisational identity and organisational identification. In addition, organisation identity strength is thought to be a different concept from organisational identity. Cole and Bruch (2006) conclude in a literature review on commitment that organisation identity strength is seen as the extent to which an employee's identity perceptions are widely held and deeply shared, and manifested in the employees' sense of organisation history, traditions, symbols, practices, and philosophy. Furthermore, organisation identity strength has been linked to influencing job attitudes and behaviours.

The relevance of the interdependence between individual and organisation thinking already noted (eg by Schein, 1999) has been extended further by Haslam (2004), who noted

> When a person identifies strongly with a given organization, he or she may more readily interpret the world, and his or her own place within it, in a manner consistent with that organization's values, ideology and culture (P 36)

Within this study, the two factors which will be of particular interest are the extent to which senior managers confront or concede age discrimination in the workplace; and the implications of the resilience or disturbance in organisational values or mission, and how this affects senior managers' desire to continue working in that organisation.

The review of literature on work commitment gives a variety of perspectives, at times competing perspectives, on the strength of an individual's attachment to the employing organisation. Furthermore, it broadens our perspectives on the wide range of factors which will impact on an individual's perspectives of their current work experiences, and the potential impact this may have on workplace behaviour, engagement, and possible withdrawal.

Intention to stay in an organisation, or to leave it, can be considered using measures such as Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991), Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) and Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999). However, my working assumption is that the nature of the questions used in that research (eg, 'I intend to look for a job outside [of this organisation] within the next year' and 'I often think about quitting my job') do not seem relevant for employees who have already worked for the same organisation for periods in excess of ten, twenty or more years.

The literature review has demonstrated that various interpretations of commitment to the organisation have a significant impact on work motivation, and the employee's intention to remain in that organisation. Different, and measurable forms of affective, continuance, and normative commitment can help the researcher to understand why an employee wishes, or needs, to remain in the organisation, and with it, the likelihood that the employee will remain motivated to perform to a high standard, or feeling stuck , and potentially disinterested, in performing well.

An area linked to individual commitment to the organisation is to what extent an employee shares the same values as the organisation, and feels loyalty and pride towards the organisation. These are the next area for consideration.

Values, Loyalty and Organisational Pride

Values, loyalty and organisational pride are included in this research because of the use which will be made later of the WERS 2004 data on values, loyalty and pride. In this review, discussion will focus on values. Values have been defined (Rokeach, 1973) as 'a small number of core ideas or cognitions present in every day society about desirable end states' (P49). Fisher and Lovell, (2009) extend this definition:

> 'Core ideas about how people should live and the ends they should seek. They are shared by a majority of people within a community or society. They are simply expressed generalities, often no more than single words such as peace and honesty' (P153).

Whilst values are simple, they may be so general as to be difficult to apply in particular situations, (Billig,1996). In the workplace, for example, loyalty to organisational goals may clash with normative values when teams are restructured and individuals made redundant, or when an opportunity of career advancement (or even continued role tenure) may conflict with personal family values of time at home. Therefore, the area of particular interest here is how an individual may hold one set of values, but the extent to which he/she may then be at ease with, or at odds with, the values of the organisation where that individual works. It is also interesting to note how and whether these change over time, and so with increasing age, and then what impact that then has on the individuals' attitude or orientation to work and the organisation.

In cases where the individual may find themselves mis-aligned with organisational goals and values, or inconsistency between what the organisation policy and practice, El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen (2004) use the term 'doublethink', as a means of containing contradiction, so that value contradiction between the organisational and the individual is not acknowledged, and not

experienced with any discomfort (P 1179). This doublethink is explained by the Orwellian description of

> To know, and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions...knowing them to be contradictory
> (Orwell, 1949, as cited by El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen 2004, P 1180)

In a study using unstructured interviews with 20 managers/professional specialists, El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen (2004) found wide evidence of double think in how the individual deals with contradiction between what the organisation says, and their own needs and values. These examples included self versus organisationally managed career; role ambiguity between home and work; equal opportunity policies being declared, but not observed; and employment injustices. The important point of this research was not simply that an individual realised that there was contradiction between organisational and/or personal values, and filtering them out by having 'different (and separate) narratives' which they live with simultaneously (P1199).

A similar view of dealing with value conflict is offered by Lowry (2006). In a review of how HR managers deal with possible value conflict, Lowry discusses 'dual loyalty' (P174) and 'bracketing' (P 177). Here, attempts are made by the HR manager to separate the workplace and organisational (public) values from privately held values. Following on from this, managers may take a range of responses to ethical dilemmas in the workplace, ranging between 'ethically mute', where no action is taken by the manager, to 'ethically active', where the manager confronts the ethical dilemma. (P 178).

As has already been noted, Whitley (1989) comments on the low degree of task and problem standardisation in management, so that as a result they become fluid and changeable (P213). Therefore, managerial functions are dynamic and

developing, and cannot be resolved by processes which assume constancy and stability. As a result, managers learn from their experiences (Chandler 1997 and Penrose 1980), and seek to make sense of their environments. In order to understand and, if necessary, change managers' behaviours in the workplace, it is important to develop an understanding of managers' formal and informal roles. Therefore, managers are perceived as having a role in determining, communicating, and interpreting organisation policy – assuming, first, that they understand that policy. However, the interpretation of formal HRM policy may require the manager to resolve the types of value clash illustrated by (Billig, 1996) and discussed by El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen (2004). Weick (2001) suggests one approach to how this may be approached by considering sense making from the perspective of how individuals interact with their organisations. In 1995, Weick proposed seven perspectives of sense making, including identity construction; making sense of situations retrospectively; sense making through action; sense - making as a social activity; sense - making as ongoing activity; sense - making focused on 'extracted cues', paying attention to some issues, and ignoring others; and sense - making driven by plausibility and risk assessment. The importance of Weick's typologies is to serve as a reminder that managers do not behave solely on the basis of what may be considered to be logic, or organisation policy, and that in the case of age discrimination, there will be multiple approaches and perceptions of how policy will be applied – assuming, of course, that managers are aware of that policy in the first instance.

However, as important as sense making is for the individual's sense of self and future career/life decisions, it is also important to consider sense giving, as passed on to other managers. Sense making has been defined (Rouleau 2005) as the way managers understand, interpret, and create sense for themselves, based on the information surrounding strategic change' (P 1415), whilst sense giving is 'concerned with their attempts to influence the outcome to communicate their thoughts about the changes to others and to gain their support' (P1415). In considering strategic change, sense making and sense giving can be seen as

considered from the perspective of understanding objective facts (Rouleau (2005), and Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991). The second perspective (Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991)) can be considered through 'narratives and stories' from top managers. Rouleau (2005) adds a third dimension which explores how sense making and sense giving processes work through communication and in daily routines and conversations (Table 16, below). The focus is how all levels of manager provide information and influence those around them to modify their daily routines and adjust their discourse to the new strategic orientation (P1432).

	First-order Explanation	**Second-order Explanation**	**Third-order Explanation**
Strategic sense making and sensegiving	Phases of change	Patterns of interpretation	Set of micro practices
Unit of analysis	Facts	Narratives, stories, discourses	Routines, conversations
Process	Evolutive	Iterative, Sequential	Co-present, mundane, practical
Context	Strategic Plan	Strategic Rules	Strategic and social rules
Individual	Top Managers	Top managers with internal and external stakeholders	Managers (top, middle, low) with internal and external agents

Table 16 Three Orders of Explanation of Strategic Sensemaking and Sensegiving
Source Rouleau (2005), P1433

Rouleau (2005) further comments that much of the study on sense making and sense giving take little account of how managers use implied [tacit] knowledge (P1416). In summary, this review of how managers may interpret, and amend their interpretation of policies and events, so that we may similarly expect that managers may not interpret issues such as age and ageism in the same way, and that individual managers will have multiple interpretations of how organisation policy and change affects their actions and their outlooks in the workplace.

2.3.3 Career Challenges: Resilience, Plateau and Burnout

Resilience

If workers, including senior managers, are to remain successfully employed, it therefore follows that there should be a discussion about how they cope with change, challenge, and set back during career, whilst remaining true to their personal and organisational values. Therefore, I wanted to explore the concept of resilience.

However, within management research, the concept of resilience is not well researched. For example, Hamel and Valikangas (2003) define resilience in terms for the organisation, where

> Strategic resilience is not about responding to a onetime crisis. It's not about rebounding from a set back. It's about continuously anticipating and adjusting to deep secular trends that can permanently impair the earning power of a core business. It's about having the capacity to change before the case for change to become desperately obvious. (P 2)

Therefore, Hamel and Valikangas (2003) set a practical test for a resilient organisation as being able to reduce the time from responding to change as 'that can't be true', to 'we must face the world as it is' (P5). At the individual level, management research is less helpful in understanding the nature of resilience. Goleman (1998) discusses resilience as a component of emotional intelligence, but fails to provide any clarity about what resilience actually is. Bennis, and Thomas, (2002) discuss the concept of 'crucibles of leadership', where managers face high challenge within their careers, and emerge as more confident and determined as a result of successfully over-coming that challenge.

However, individual definitions of resilience are offered by Youssef and Luthans (2007), and Luthans (2002), who defined resilience as

> The developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, and failure or even positive events, progress and increased responsibility (P702)

Youssef and Luthans (2007), distinguish resilience from hope, optimism and other positive attributes. In particular, resilience is seen as the need both to be proactive and to take reactive measures when faced with adversity (P779). Furthermore, it requires adaptation, flexibility, and improvisation in situations characterised by change and uncertainty (P 780). Based on empirical work, Youssef and Luthans (2007), find resilience to be linked with organisational commitment, work happiness, and job satisfaction, but not work performance (P793).

Coutu (2002) suggests that 'an increasing body of empirical evidence which shows that resilience – whether in children, survivors of concentration camps, or business back from the brink – can be learned' (P 48). Coutu concludes that the three characteristics of resilience are a staunch acceptance of reality; a deep belief, often buttressed by strongly held values; and a belief that life is meaningful, with an uncanny ability to improvise (P48). However, Coutu's assertion that resilience, as evidenced from concentration camp survivorship, is framed around three characteristics, but fails to explain why so many concentration camp inmates with similar characteristics were undoubtedly put to death – how individuals may deal with overwhelming powerlessness. For example, Clements (1990) describes how Dietrich Bonhoeffer (who, it may be argued, demonstrated Coutu's three survivorship characteristics) appeared to be a simple pastor, apparently working occasionally for the German Abwehr, whilst at the same time working against the Nazi regime, and who was eventually hanged by the Gestapo. Similarly, in the context of managerial 'survivorship' and

resilience, the strategies and outcomes of how one manager continues in an organisation are more complex than suggested by Coutu.

Overall, the management literature on resilience is diffuse, and Ollier-Malaterre (2010) comments that work-life and resilience initiatives are under demonstrated both theoretically and empirically (P 42). In particular, literature fails to make clear what resilience is, whether the aim of resilience is to thrive against adversity as an individual, or to survive within the organisation, even if that means suppressing personal values and growth to do so. In the research on senior managers, evidence of resilience (or lack of resilience) in older workers will be considered. However, the positive stoicism of resilience may be difficult in practice to distinguish from good luck (to have survived), or inertia, an inability of the employee to move on, despite an unsatisfactory working environment. Finally, however, most working lives do come to an end, so that a study of older workers must also consider endings of career, first by considering career plateau and burnout, and finally plans to end career.

Career Plateau

Career plateau is the time when an employee no longer believes that there is an opportunity for progression. It has been defined as

> The point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low (Ference, Stoner, and Warren, 1977, P602)

A lack of further hierarchical progression could conceivably be considered to be a source of satisfaction for the employee (for example, the employee feeling satisfied that they have reached their maximum potential), but on the contrary, research suggests that no further hierarchical progression is a source of dissatisfaction. For example, Nicholson and West (1988) found in a study of

managers that perceptions of career were framed around past, present, and future career transition prospects.

On the causes of career plateau, Ference Stoner and Warren(1977) also distinguish between two reasons for career plateau: organisational plateau, where there no longer appear to be opportunities within the organisation; and personal plateau, where organisational opportunities may still exist, but the employee is no longer able to take advantage of such opportunities. Such organisational opportunities may have been frustrated for many managers over the previous two decades, as organisational restructures and delayering of management posts have tended to reduce the hierarchical structures which previously provided incremental progression (for example Kanter, 1989, and Weick and Berlinger, 1989) for developing managerial careers. Ference, Stoner and Warren (1977) identify four types of plateaued employee: Learners or comers, who have high prospects for future development, but whose work performance is currently below standard; Stars, who exceed performance standards, and have high prospects for future development; Solid citizens: who perform well, but have little opportunity for future development (and who are considered to form the majority of an organisation's population);Deadwood: employees perceived as both underperforming, and with little development potential or opportunity. These categories serve as reminders that the reasons for career plateau may vary considerably, and that the individual response to plateau will also depend, at least in part, to how and why that individual is currently at a work plateau.

Alternative descriptors of career plateau include Bardwick (1986) (cited in Duffy, 2000), who identified Structural Plateau, where organisational structure means that the opportunity for progression becomes restricted; Content Plateau, where an employee has become fully skilled and competent in the role; and Personal Plateau, where the employee lacks any further enthusiasm for work or non work activity, and lacks energy and drive. Of these different typologies, the employee

who has reached Content Plateau may be argued to have the best opportunity to move forward again, subject to a willingness and opportunity to learn new skills. On the other hand, employees who have reached a Personal Plateau may require substantial support to re-engage with meaningful career progress.

Similar conclusions were reached by Smith-Ruig (2009) who, in noting the importance of understanding career plateau for both older, and more senior employees, found that addressing the need for continued personal development was important to enhance employee commitment and job satisfaction: in other words, whilst career plateau was not necessarily viewed negatively, organisations had an important role in supporting the employee at this time (P619). Furthermore, Smith-Ruig (2009) also found that career plateau could be experienced by workers in their forties and even in their thirties, so was not restricted to those in their fifties. Whilst this study was based on senior accounting employees in Australia, Smith-Ruig (2009) concluded that organisations would need to address job satisfaction and commitment of senior employees, as the Australian population became older – and if organisations wanted to retain staff into their fifties and sixties.

Near (1985) considered life satisfaction of plateaued careers, and found – perhaps expectedly - that non-plateaued employees had higher overall life satisfaction than those whose career had plateaued. However, Chao, (1990) looked at career plateau as a perceived event on behalf of the employee, and found that the employee perception was of greater significance than consideration of plateau on the basis of time in role. If career plateau is about the employee's perception, then it is also important to consider that person's length of service in one organisation, and age. Lawrence (1984) found that managers had a subjective perspective of career progression, and their own timetable for what they considered to be appropriate progress. In achieving career progression as evidenced by hierarchical moves, managers who move between organisations are more likely to achieve more senior roles than those who remain in one

organisation (for example, Nicholson and West, 1988 for managers in the UK, Veiga, 1983, and Rosenbaum, 1978 and 1989 for managers in the USA). Similarly, older managers (Herriot, Gibson, Pemberton, and Pinder, 1993) were more likely to feel 'behind' in career progression than younger managers, and that age was a powerful predictor of intention for managers to leave an organisation, justifying additional research of age and life-career stages. Overall, therefore, we may see a linkage between the models of career life stage models (such as proposed by Super 1957, and 1990, and Levinson, 1978), and career expectations and career plateau. In particular, we may see that later in career, and in age, there comes a period of levelling off in career hierarchical growth, that this is at least in part linked with employee perception, rather than any organisationally 'objective' criteria (Chao, 1990), and that this may be linked with lower life satisfaction (Near, 1985) than for non-plateaued employees.

Organisational responses to support employees who have experienced career plateau may include career counselling, and health and well being workshops (Ivancevich and DeFrank, 1990), or job enrichment schemes such as job redesign, project roles, or paid sabbaticals (Tan and Salomone, 1994). Rantze and Feller (1985) suggested that approaches to dealing with plateaued employees may include:

> Placid, where the employee accepts that career has plateaued, and hides personal frustration;
> Hopscotch, where the employee remains in the organisation, but seeks lateral career moves;
> Change of uniform, where the employee moves to a different organisation, and hopes that a new environment will re-establish career;
> Entrepreneurial or intrapreneurial approaches, where the employee either opts for self employment, or is encouraged or supported to take new risks in the current organisation (P25-26)

Of course, organisations may alternatively opt not to provide any additional assistance or support to employees as well. Boyatzis, McKee and Goleman (2002) suggest that passion for work may be re-established with work renewal strategies, such as taking a sabbatical, joining a learning programme, creating reflective structures, working with a coach, or finding new meanings in familiar work (P90-92). For Dychtwald, Erickson and Morison (2004), the challenge is 'to reconnect with these [older] employees before they are ready to take the retirement package and run' (P 51).

In the context of this research study, the existence of, and solutions to career plateau are dependent on organisations having identified that an employee has reached this point, and then has the willingness and the means to address plateau. We may also expect that career plateau is more likely to be experienced by older workers, and those who have remained longer with the same organisation during their careers. In the field research for this paper, it will also be interesting to observe to what extent any senior managers who may perceive themselves to have reached a plateau or burnout have had the type of support suggested by Rantze and Feller (1985).

Career Burnout

Burnout has been described (Schaufeli, Taris, van Rhenen, 2008) as a state of mental weariness. Morison, Erickson, and Dytchwald (2006) considered US executives in the 35-54 age range, and found that sources of frustration included career bottleneck (too many baby-boomers chasing too few roles in delayered organisations); work-life tensions (parents and/or children); and lengthening horizons, in which planned retirement dates became deferred; skills obsolescence; disillusion, or career burnout . However, other researchers have attached far more negative descriptors of this state. Following Freudenberger's (1974) original work on career burnout, Burke (1993) noted that feelings from career burnout included emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation (excessive

detachment from people and clients in the work-place), and reduced personal accomplishment, in which the employee evaluates personal work performance negatively, feels incompetent, and unable to achieve goals. Similarly negative descriptions of burnout were identified by Maslach (1993), who viewed burnout as exhaustion (drained mental resources); cynicism (indifference or a distant attitude towards ones job); and lack of professional efficacy (the tendency to evaluate personal work performance in a negative way, with feelings of insufficiency and poor job-related self-esteem).

The causes of burnout may be attributed to workaholism (defined by Oates, 1971 as the compulsive or uncontrollable need to work incessantly, P11), where employees who work excessively use their mental resources to the extent that they feel depleted and burn out (Maslach, 1986). Contrary to burnout is the concept of the 'engaged employee' who is defined by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002) as one who has a positive and fulfilling state of mind, with vigor (high levels of energy, persistence, and resilience); dedication (sense of pride, significance, enthusiasm; inspiration, and challenge; and absorption (fully concentrated on work, and difficult to detach from work). Therefore, the definition of an engaged employee may be seen as coming close to that of a workaholic, itself identified as a probable source for employee burnout.

However, Schaufeli, Taris, van Rhenen, (2008) suggest that a key difference between engaged employees and workaholics is that engaged employees do not feel guilty if they are not working, and enjoy activities and relationships outside work. In their study of 854 middle managers and executives of a Dutch telecommunications company, Schaufeli, Taris, van Rhenen, (2008) found that the relationships between workaholism, burnout and engagement were complex, and that whilst burnout could be considered the opposite of engagement, workaholism had features of both states(P192). However, they found that the consequences of burnout came not from working excessive hours, but from

impaired social functioning, health problems (distress, depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic health problems) job demands, lack of resources (including lack of job control, and lack of support from co-workers and supervisors), job dissatisfaction, and low organisational commitment. It was further noted from this research on burnout that exhaustion tended to be linked with distress and job demands; cynicism tended to be linked with distress and job dissatisfaction; and reduced professional efficacy tended to be linked with lacking resources to do the job (P192). This research did not differentiate workaholism, engagement, and burnout on the basis of age. However, burnout needs to be understood as one of the possible factors which may be found later in field research to contribute to reduced job performance, and/or job satisfaction. In this way, burnout may contribute towards pressure on the individual, or desire from that individual, to cease a career earlier than the normal retirement age; on the other hand, employee engagement may contribute to a desire both from the organisation and the individual to continue to work beyond normal retirement age.

Given the perceived requirement for longer working lives, with increasing proportions of older people remaining within the workforce, it is perhaps surprising that there has not been more study of countering the effects of career burnout – in other words, to develop an understanding of what is required to support older workers as employees who continue to be valued for their contribution, and who believe that they are valued by their employers for that contribution.

2.3.4 Ending of Career

If the latter stages of understanding of 'career' are problematic and changing, the end of occupational employment and transition to retirement are especially difficult to predict. But this difficulty is not simply a response to 20th or 21st century lifestyles. Seneca (5BC-AD65) observed that

> You will hear many people saying, when I am fifty I shall retire into leisure; and when I am sixty, I shall give up public duties...And what guarantee do you have of longer life? Who will allow your course to proceed as you arrange it?...How stupid to forget our mortality and put off sensible plans to our fiftieth and sixtieth years aiming at a point of life at which few have arrived! (P5), and

> People are delighted to accept pensions and gratuities for which they hire out their their labour or their support or their services. But nobody works out the value of their time: men use it lavishly as if it cost nothing (P12)

Two millennia later, we may not be much further forward in understanding when people may wish to end their careers. Crown (1996) observed on working life in the USA that

> Ironically, although we know a great deal about the determinants of retirement, we know remarkably little about older workers and what motivates them to remain in the labour force (P 2)

Following from this, Crown (1996) cautions presumptions that an individual's propensity to continue to work, or preferring to retire may be predictable. This reflects the complexity of understanding work/retirement decisions, but may also reflect the researcher's perspective:

> Whilst economists see retirement as a relationship between income and leisure, social gerontologists see it as a relationship between people and jobs (P 11)

But despite Crown's caution on identifying reasons why some wish to retire early, whilst others continue to work, other researchers suggest a range of reasons. For example, the availability of social security support has been identified as one

component of retirement planning, as have the position of the labour market, and organisations demand or other incentives to retire early (Esser, 2005 and Hardy and Quadagno, 1995), or norms related to pensions availability and incentives (Ekerdt 1998). The existence of an early retirement culture was identified by Esser (2005) who found that across twenty three different countries, the preferred retirement age amongst respondents was 58: this is well below current state retirement ages (for example increasing from 60 for women and 65 for men in the UK), and also well below the age of 68 identified by Turner, Drake and Hills (2006) as a future retirement age if the UK is to be able to afford the cost of future pensions.

Further UK evidence that many people do wish to retire early has been supported by research by Moynagh and Worsley (2004) who found that individuals wanted a flexible approach to retirement, and 'liquid lives' where they were free to change careers and work patterns over the age of 50. The CIPD (2003) found support for this view, since 77% of 25-50 year olds wanted to retire early. Given the UK background explained in section 2.1, where people would be expected to work longer, the challenge for societies and organisations is how this transformation will occur, since, as Moynagh and Worsley (2004) point out

> Change [to longer working lives] will not be easy. Today's concept of retirement is deeply entrenched and will not transform overnight. Many people still see retirement both as a reward for hard work, and as a right to an extended period of leisure (P3).

The desire to retire early has been attributed by some researchers as a response to the availability of generous pension benefits (for example, McVittie, McKinley, and Widdicombe, 2003). Other researchers have considered the experience of working life for older workers, and consider the desire to retire early to be less about wishing to enjoy a new lifestyle, rather than to avoid their perceptions of feeling undervalued and discriminated against by their occupational organisation

(Branine and Glover, 1997, P 241). A similar finding was made by Moynagh and Worsley (2004) who noted the pace of work was not welcomed

> Many people in their fifties and sixties resist the notion of later retirement because all the pressures and stresses of work leave them exhausted. [One older worker told them] 'the stress is difficult to deal with at times you know. I don't really feel I need that when I am in my mid fifties' (P 53)

Further support for the value of a good working environment was found in a Swedish study (Soidre, 2005) that where workers were in roles which they found to be rewarding, they tended to want to continue working as they became older, whereas if there were poor working conditions (for example, pay), their approach was instrumental, and they tended to want to leave work at an earlier age (P 943). More recent empirical research has sought to understand more about the transition to post working life. For example, Crego, de la Hara, and Martinez-Inigo (2008) examined early retirement decisions in Spain from a psychosocial perspective. Their research underlined that early retirement decisions were a variety of personal, psychosocial, organisational and social reasons (P199). The study supported earlier findings by Henkens and Tazelaar (1994), Mein and Ellison (2006) and Shultz, Morton, and Weckerle (1998) that early retirement was linked to variables such as health, work attitudes, the organisational context, and personal finances (P 199). However, their research also pointed to additional factors such as family situation, 'career' perceptions at the time of retirement, the difference between expected and actual age at retirement, and the individual's organisational commitment (P199).

Overall, Beehr (1986) considered the variables affecting the retirement process as falling with three main categories: personal; work-related, and retirement related. Personal factors relate to age, gender, health, financial (a strong predictor), home conditions, and social relationships. Work-related circumstances are job demands and control, attitudes towards the job, physical effort, and

repetition of tasks. Subsequent research (for example, Adams, Prescher, Beehr, and Lepisto, 2002, and Taylor and Shore, 1995) has found that the results related to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction are either ambiguous or show no impact. It has also been found that an individual's perceived ability to adapt to retirement was correlated to that individuals' plans for early retirement (Taylor and Shore, 1995). Overall, Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008) summarised that there are a wide variety of research-based factors which determine retirement plans and actuality: push reasons, such as escape from perceived aversive organisational conditions or risks related to working life, and pull factors, such as retirement, leisure, and relaxation (P188). As a result, they conclude that the many variables linked with early retirement mean that individuals' reasons for retiring, and subsequent adaptation to retirement, are highly heterogeneous.

The implications of organisational commitment and retirement were further explored by Luchak, Pohler, and Gellaty (2008). This Canadian-based study examined employees who were working under a defined – benefit pension plan (that is, similar to the UK final salary pension, where pension is based on years service with the organisation, and pensionable years completed with the organisation). This study considered which was the most economically attractive age at which an employee might retire, and compared the results with actual intentions and employee organisational commitment. The findings showed that employees with strong affective commitment were more likely to plan to retire later, even where this may be later than the economically optimal age to retire under the defined benefit plan. In contrast, employees with high continuance commitment but lower affective commitment were most likely to retire at the economically optimal retirement age. In both cases, however, the economically optimal retirement age was 57, with detrimental impacts if the employee continued to working beyond age 60(P 593). This age is five years lower than the UK normal retirement age of 65 for men , and eight years lower than the new

retirement age as suggested by Turner, Drake and Hills (2006) for the UK Second Report of the Pensions Commission.

The trend towards early retirement may also have a separate explanation in the social identity of the individual worker. Desmette and Gaillard (2008) considered early retirement of 352 workers in the 50-59 year age range in Belgium. Early retirement intentions were linked to that of their age related peers: most of the people of a similar age (albeit below normal retirement age) were able to leave on early retirement terms, so that individuals wished to follow this norm as well, and so retire early (P 180). This is explained as self-categorisation (as being an older worker, Turner 1999), rather than social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979) which may have explained the desire to retire as wishing to leave a group to which the individual felt low identification. Significantly for managing age diversity in organisations, Desmette and Gaillard (2008) noted that disengagement with work was reduced when 'boundaries between the younger and older workers' groups were impermeable, and/or older workers were not affectively involved in their in-group' (P181). In other words, where organisations employed both older and younger workers, there was lower intention to retire when older and younger workers worked well together, but if there was low social co-operation (inter-group processes'P182) between them, older workers were more likely to become disengaged from the work place and seek early retirement.

A Dutch study (van Veldhoven and Dorenbosch, 2008) showed that organisational career management polices and processes tended to be directed towards younger workers. For older workers, career self-management tended to be practised, and that continued personal development was important for those older workers who wished to maintain a career. Such proactivity in development could help to offset the negative environment for older workers, including fewer development opportunities, and 'possible managerial and public prejudice [of their status as being older]'P127. This research, although specific to Holland, appears to reinforce the importance of older workers, not only in maintaining their

development if they are to remain in an active career, but to have the self initiative to take much of the personal responsibility for it as well.

The research by Luchak, Pohler, and Gellaty (2008) highlights the importance of considering work commitment as well as economic considerations as part of retirement decisions. In view of the macro socio economic background described in section 2.1 of this paper, the research underlines the importance of retirement benefits which do not carry a significant disincentive to continued employment beyond an optimal age as indicated by the defined benefit retirement plan.

Even where an employee may leave the current workplace, it does not follow that working life or economic working life will come to an end. This has raised the availability of phased or bridge retirement, where the employee may continue to work in a different role, and/or on different terms and conditions of employment and/or in a different organisation. Gobeski and Beehr (2009) found that bridge retirement was likely to increase, as the emerging retirement dates of baby boomers increased. A study of 171 retirees by Gobeski and Beehr (2009) suggested that where workers found work where skills specifically related to the career work, they were more likely to work in a career related role than to retire completely, and were also more likely to undertake bridge retirement if their main careers had been intrinsically motivational. On the other hand, employees who had been stressed in their main careers were not likely to pursue similar activities in post career employment. Flynn (2010) has suggested that UK workers who work beyond age 65 tend to stay in the same post and with the same employer.

However, despite all the discussion about the factors which may be perceived as within the individual's control, or span of influence, the role and power of the employing organisation in providing the conditions to enable early retirement cannot be overlooked. Whilst this may be expressed in benevolent terms such as facilitating or easing the employee into retirement, Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008) identified Spanish workers' experience and companies

> 'absolute decision making power to achieve organisational goals' (P194) in which employees considered that once organisations had the 'intention of getting rid of them, [organisations] would use different strategies to force the offer. As a consequence, they [employees] defined their situation as one of uncertainty and helplessness: to accept the early retirement plan implied facing an unknown post working life, whereas to refuse the offer could imply remaining in an equally uncertain working life (new organisational policies and procedures, new working conditions, risk of dismissal, fear that early retirement incentive could be worse in the future, etc)' (P194).

In this context, we may consider employees' intentions of early retirement not simply in terms of desire to manage their own lives, but also as a contingency to plan for a time when there may be expectation of pressure from the organisation to leave work. Further support for this comes from Flynn (2010) who noted that employers' practices in relation to retirement may not be fully reflected in their published or revealed HR policies (P8).

Overall, therefore, retaining workers who remain willing and motivated to work for an organisation also requires a workplace where older workers continue to feel valued and where their achievements are appropriately recognised. Further examination of senior managers' experience of the psychological contract, and their experience of feeling valued for their contribution will therefore be considered during the field research.

2.3.5 The Fit with Career Theory

So far, the chapter has considered some of the elements within a person's career, and this final section will seek to integrate this with overall career theory. Careers, perhaps like beauty, are in the mind of the holder. A classic perspective of career was offered by Hughes (1937), who defined it as

> A series of statutes and clearly defined offices...subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his [*sic*] life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things that happen to him (P 143)

A more contemporary definition from Arnold (1997) is of career as 'The sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities, and experiences encountered by a person' (P 16). Career stages and linked attributes to those stages have been researched over several decades, and a summary of some of the highlights of that research, and relevance to age, is shown in Table 17 below. In 1957, Super identified five career/life stages, from Growth and Exploration, to Career Establishment from age 25, to Maintenance and ultimately Career Decline and Disengagement. Subsequently, Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) developed a detailed model, framed around four key life stages but with detailed transition points approximately every four to five years of a person's life (see Table 17).

Super (1957)	Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978)	Characteristics of different ca life stages
Growth (age 0-10 years) Self concept through identification with family and school	**Early Adulthood (age 20-40)** **Early Adult Transitions (age17-20)** Start to think about place in the world, separate from parents, school, etc **Entering the adult world (age 23-28)** Develop sense of personal identity in work and non work **Thirties transition (age 29-33)** Evaluate accomplishments of age twenties, and adjust to adopted life structure **Settling Down (age 34-39)** Work towards achievement of work goals; commitment to family, work, community	'By early school years children h acquired occupational stereotypes refle traditional gender-role stereot (Rubenfeld and Gilroy (1991) P64; ge preference roles also supported by Cook (1993) and Usinger (2005))
Exploration (age 15-24 years)		Self concept crystallises through experi and reality testing. Individuals m interests and capabilities to occupa and apply self-concept roles. Stereot refined.
Establishment (age 25-44 years) Find a permanent career, opportunities, and promotion		
Maintenance (age 44-64 years) Holding on, and maintenance of self-concept and job status. Career choices about staying with current occupation or organisation.	**Middle adulthood 40-60** **Mid-Life Transition (age 40-45)** Evaluate accomplishments of age thirties, and adjust to adopted life structure. Recognise and adjust to limits of achievement and mortality, **Entering Middle adulthood (age 46-50)** Develop greater stability, as questions from earlier stage become part of mindset **Fifties transition (age 51-55)** Raise questions about lifestyle previously adopted **Culmination of middle adulthood (age 56-60)** Answer previous questions and adjust lifestyle choices	Society age norms may start to que age for a particular role (eg Lawre 1988). Job shift if discomfort supervision by younger mana (Brewington and Nassar-McMillan, 200 Loss of colleagues of similar age b may lead to feelings of work isolation job dissatisfaction (Gibson and Ba 2003). Career plateau (Tan and Salom 1994)
Decline/Disengagement (age 64+) Mental and physical power decline and pace of work eases back		Individuals seek to develop a self-image self concept independent of the work (Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson, 200 Employment during ages 60/70s may l some longer in the maintenance st (Brewington and Nassar-McMillan, 200

Table 17 To Show Models of Career Development

Super's original proposals of five stages of career (and their uncanny echo to Shakespeare's seven ages of man in 'As you Like It') have been followed up by substantial research and critical review. For Levinson et al (1978) age 50 is a time of transition, with conflict, questioning and change, depending on how that person may have responded to mid-life transition; even so, organisational commitment, involvement, satisfaction, and performance are expected to be lower at this time, reflecting some uncertainty about career aspiration and accomplishment. By the culmination of middle adulthood (age 56-60), Levinson et al (1978) expect acceptance of work and family, and for job attitudes and work performance to be stable. However, whilst Super (1984) acknowledged that the Levinson et al (1978) career stage models may look the same when drawn graphically, Super asserted that the concepts were different: in particular, Super(1984) emphasised that his concept of career stages was less linear and less determined by age than for Levinson et al (1978). Instead, Super (1984) emphasised the psychological fit of each stage, even though many writers have operationalised Super's concept by age stages (Ornstein, Cron and Slocum, 1989).

Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) have suggested that Super's (1957) career stages may be linked with[self] image norms, defined as

> The belief that individuals must present or possess a certain image, consistent with occupational, organisational, or industry standards, in order to achieve career success (P318).

These self image norms are linked with physical and image attractiveness, and review a wide range of literature suggesting that (amongst other attributes) height, weight, clothing, and facial beauty may have on achieving career success at each of Super's career stages (P327).

But these highly structured life stages are not well supported by empirical evidence, so are difficult to claim as generalisable. Levinson et al's (1978) research was undertaken only in one organisation (IBM), and with forty men, so despite the frequency with which this work is incorporated in further research, it is difficult to generalise from the original research. Furthermore, in short time frames, Levinson et al (1978) are seeking to define stereotypical behaviour patterns for older workers in spite of Achenbaum's (2005) interpretation of older age as being heterogeneous in behaviours, lifestyles, and outlooks. Similarly, less empirical research has been undertaken on the early and later stages of Super's (1990) career model (Swanson, 1992 and later stages, Vondracek, 2001). In an empirical comparative study of Levinson and Super, Ornstein, Cron and Slocum, (1989) found that employees in their thirties were more willing to leave their employers and to relocate than at any other age; but they did not find that those in their mid to late thirties were more committed and willing to settle down, committed and satisfied, in contradiction to Levinson's model (P131). Similarly, employees in the early stage of career were more likely to receive poor performance ratings than those later in their careers; but significantly, employees in the latter stages of career did not record lower job satisfaction, satisfaction, or commitment to work, although they were less likely to be interested in promotion or relocation (Ornstein, Cron and Slocum, (1989), P 131). Alderfer and Guzzo (1979) supported Levinson et als' (1978) perspective that individuals seek different types of psychological growth at different life stages. However, Rush, Peacock, and Milkovich (1980) found that there was no difference in job commitment, job satisfaction or work performance across age ranges.

Erikson (1959, 1980) also suggested identity around life stage type, with the latter four of Erikson's eight stages being Intimacy versus Role Confusion (reflecting adolescent crisis; Intimacy versus Isolation (age late twenties to early thirties), where relationships are formed; Generality versus Stagnation (much of adulthood, with a gradual handover of experience to younger people); and Ego Integrity v Despair (where the individual does, or does not, accept themselves for

what they are). Each of these approaches has been subject to additional research and critique. For example, Erikson's stages have been described (Arnold, 1997) as reflecting a strangely benevolent view of society (P 126), and that careers in the twenty first century will probably require more individual flexibility from the individual than suggested by Erikson. Super's work on the latter stages of career have been described only in general terms. Indeed Super latterly (1990) emphasised that career stages should not rigorously be linked to age ranges. Recognising that not all people respond to the concept of career in the same, predictable fashion, Ornstein, Cron and Slocum, (1989) suggested that further research needed to be undertaken to understand better why some people move through all stages of Super's career stages in a sequential order, whilst others always seem to remain in the establishment stage of career, throughout the period of their paid occupational employment (P132).

It is clear that the context for careers is changing, with changes in demographics, changes in organisation structures and hierarchies, and changes in the types of employment available (Arnold, 1997). Recognising these changes, Mirvis and Hall (1994) first used the term of 'boundaryless careers': here, career is no longer identified by moves within an organisation but through the totality of work experience and achievement, and through that person's role as a spouse, partner, parent, or member of the community (P387). The mid 1990s also saw researchers concluding that employees were encouraged to change their relationship – a new psychological contract – with their employers, so that the emphasis became one of employability. This concept was intended to replace dependence on the organisation for career, also referred to, in somewhat disparaging terms, as 'the bureaucratic career' (Cohen and Mallon, 1999, P333), where the employee advances through a sequence of roles in a formally defined hierarchy of positions. (for example, Kanter, 1989, P 509).

What is not yet sufficiently clear, however, is whether older people are no longer interested in these elements of their working lives (for example, because they

have entered the maintenance or decline phases of their careers, as Super, 1957, or Levinson et al, 1978), or have become disinterested as a result of organisational behaviours towards them – for example, with less access to learning and development opportunities, as evidenced by Taylor and Walker, 1994.

2.4 Key Concepts Arising for the Literature Review

In this section, the key concepts arising from the literature review will be examined.

The National Picture

The literature review considered the national and social drivers which led to the introduction of the EE(A)R, outlawing age discrimination in the workplace, but noted that those national and social priorities for older people in employment may not always be recognised at organisational level. Managers within organisations have a key role in the design and implementation of policy, and acting as figureheads to implement new polices and systems (for example, see Mintzberg, 1975; Penrose, 1980; and Hales, 2001). My previous experience as a senior manager, and earlier study (Neugebauer, 2004) also led me to believe that if these national priorities are to be achieved, it would be important to gain a better understanding of how and why senior managers perceive age.

Age

Vincent (1999) reflects on society attitudes which ask the question 'what is it about being old in the UK at the end of the twentieth century that makes older people feel that their humanity is threatened?' (P1). A similar question, but with a different mix of undertones, may be asked about the role of older people in the workplace. The review has also highlighted the need for a better understanding of age, ageism, and the facts on the physiology and psychology of age, and age

in the workplace, and so has borrowed from research in gerontology. In strategic management research, Pettigrew, Thomas, and Whittington (2002) criticise 'promiscuous borrowing of other disciplines' (P6). And yet, without cross-fertilisation of knowledge across disciplines, learning will surely become myopic, quirky, inefficient, and ultimately moribund. Therefore, within the resources available for this research, a real attempt has been made to learn something from other disciplines, and apply them to this research topic.

There is extensive evidence that older people have negative stereotypes attached to their age (for example, Braithwaite, 1986, Coupland, Coupland and Giles 1991, Nuessel, 1982, and Gold, Arbuckle and Andres 1994, Achenbaum, 2005, Vincent, 1999). Furthermore, age is not only calendar–based, but linked to multiple social constructs, many of which are further linked to expectations of physical, cognitive, or psychosocial decline (for example Stuart-Hamilton, Claes and Heymans, 2008, Farrell and Piotrowski, 1991). Within employment, Kooij, de Lange, and Dikkers (2008) draw together nine possible definitions of age in the workplace, of which eight are based on psychosocial rather than calendar criteria. However, whilst the literature review has noted that mental and physical abilities undoubtedly change with age, there is little evidence that this significantly undermines work performance; in some areas age may actually enhance work performance (Rhodes, 1983). A linked question for this research is whether senior managers actually understand and recognise the positive benefits of older workers in organisations, or whether their attitudes towards older workers are based on socially constructed views and negative stereotypes. This question becomes central to Bond, Hollywood, and Colgan's (2009) observation that organisations need support from the most senior managers to pursue an equalities agenda effectively, and we may expect this especially if diversity and age diversity are only likely to attract managers' attention if they help achieve organisational performance (Coupland, Tempest and Barnatt, 2008, Duncan 2003 and 2008, and Forbes,1996).

Drawing these different perspectives of age together, the thesis will adopt social construction as the research frame for qualitative research with senior managers. Social construction resists the basis that meaning – in this case age - is, by itself, objective, so that knowledge cannot be seen as disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but is in some sense ideological, political, and permeated with values.

Employers are now required under the EE(A)R to avoid age based direct and non-direct discrimination, and harassment and victimisation, based on age. Despite this, not all organisations have equality or diversity policies (CIPD 2009), and even where equality and diversity policies existed, Lyon and Pollard (1997) and Mc Nair and Flynn (2005) questioned to what extent managers actually worked within those policies. In support of these findings, WERS 2004 (see Table 14,Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge, 2006, P248) suggests that organisations are unlikely to monitor or respond to data from equality and diversity monitoring. The early years of referrals of age related cases to Employment Tribunals show that age constitutes 6.9% of all discrimination cases (Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal Statistics, April, 2006 to March 2010 (GB)), which does not yet suggest a major problem. However, the low numbers of Employment Tribunal cases to date need to be seen in context. Glover and Branine, (1997) suggest that older workers are more compliant and tolerant of discriminatory practices, and Taylor and Walker (1997) found that older workers' closer proximity to retirement age made them easier to persuade into leaving the organisation on early retirement packages – at the time that these were available. As recently as 2009, Riach has continued to observe 'deeply ingrained' age bias in UK workplaces. So we may infer that the full extent of age discrimination and ageism in UK workplaces remains latent.

The literature review also considered the concepts of the business case or social justice case arguments in favour of age diversity policies in the workplace. The field research will look for evidence that senior managers acknowledge these two

models, recognising Bond, Hollywood, and Coglan's (2009) finding that support for an equalities and diversity agenda needs to come from the most senior levels of an organisation's management. This presents three challenges to organisations: understanding the value of older workers; how to provide policies which will continue to engage and value older workers in their organisations; and the leadership with which senior managers, many of whom are themselves already older, manage the implementation of these policies.

These questions lead to the second major area of investigation from the literature review which was careers and older workers.

Career

The literature review considered a range of influences on senior managers' careers, including psychological contract, performance management, commitment, organisational value alignment, loyalty and pride, and career, career plateau and burnout, and observations about career in general.

The psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995 and Rousseau and Greller,1994) was considered in terms of the employees' beliefs of what is expected of them, and what in return they may expect from the employer. It was seen as an exchange agreement between the individual and the organisation, although the concept of the psychological contract was itself challenged from a number of different perspectives, and subject to many different interpretations (for example Guest 1998, 2004, Boxall and Purcell, 2003, Cullinane and Dundon 2006, Setton, Bennett, and Liden,1996). Nevertheless, Cullinane and Dundon (2006) note that the ideological appeal of the psychological contract as a 'feel good and feel powerful message' (P124), and it was considered to be a useful frame to consider older senior managers' perceptions of feeling valued within this thesis. We may expect older workers to manage negative events at work better than younger workers (Carstensen, 2003), older workers' psychological contracts to

be more stable than their younger colleagues (Rousseau, 2001), older workers to want to their career endings to be a positive experience (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, and Charles, 1999) and for older workers to have different psychological contracts from their younger colleagues. (Anderson and Schalk, 1998). It was also seen that an issue which may cause a major breach for a younger worker would be seen as less critical by an older worker (Carstensen, Fung, and Charles, 2003). This research will consider the perceived sources and impacts of changes on older senior managers' working lives.

The potential contribution of performance management to recognise the value of older senior managers may be judged from the positive self efficacy which it may promote, and the perceived motivational effects of positive goal feedback (Bandura, 1989, Bandura and Jourden,1991, and Locke and Latham, 2002). Whilst Berry and West (1993) found some goal commitment deterioration in older workers, this was not replicated in West, Bagwell, and Dark-Freudman's (2005) observation that goal progress was important for older workers, even though positive goal feedback was not always essential. However, McNair and Flynn (2005) noted that employers may tend to be more lenient on performance management for older workers. The research on performance management gives the opportunity to consider how older senior managers perceive the value of performance management, and its relevance to their commitment and career intentions.

Commitment was considered within the terms of affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997), but the linkage between age and commitment is not clear. For example, affective commitment appears to be only weakly correlated with age (Mathieu and Zatac, 1990), but Meyer and Allen (1997) see the possibility of older workers as having had both different generational experiences, or more positive work experiences. Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2008) model how affective commitment may link with intention to leave or remain in an organisation. In continuance commitment, older workers

are expected to have a higher intention/need to remain with their organisation (for example, Snape and Redman, 2003). This research will seek to gain a better understanding of older managers' commitment, and whether this can be linked to their intentions to continue working or retiring early.

The literature review has considered the important contexts within which managers make sense of change – both strategically, and how it impacts on themselves as individuals. Values, loyalty and organisational pride were considered, as well as the potential causes of value conflict, double think (El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen, 2004) and bracketing (Lowry, 2006). Within the field research, Values, Loyalty and organisational pride will be examined using WERS 2004 data, and the causes, and outcomes of value conflict, including the need for resilience, and the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, and failure or even positive events, progress and increased responsibility (Luthans, 2002, P702).

The literature review has considered career burnout, and career plateau. Career burnout was described by Schaufeli, Taris, and van Rhenen, 2008 as a state of mental weariness, although Burke's definition of 'exhaustion' is perhaps more accurate. The separate concept of career plateau is defined as the point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low (Ference, Stoner, and Warren,1977). Both career burnout and career plateau were seen to have multiple causes. The field research in this thesis will look for evidence and causes of career burnout and plateau amongst senior managers, and to what extent these may have been resolved or aggravated over the three year period of this study.

It is clear that models of career are in a state of flux at all age levels. This lack of clarity equally applies to older workers. First, they are exposed to the same questions about the nature of career, and work as for all age groups. Second, they are exposed to age-related challenges, including discrimination and

decisions about work continuation or withdrawal. Older workers appear to face with more immediacy than their younger colleagues the prospect of longer working lives. For many, the prospect of early retirement is slipping away (Taylor, 2006, Turner, Drake and Hills, 2006, and HMRC 2009), with a need to reframe domestic plans and career perspectives for longer working lives. The literature review has demonstrated that little is understood about career and expectations for those managers in the later stages of their working lives. Of that which is already apparent (for example Super, (1990, 1980, 1957) and Levinson et al, (1978)), little encourages the view that individuals relish the prospect of working longer. Therefore, it is relevant to consider to what extent theories of career adequately recognise the dynamics of the twenty first century in general, and the experiences of senior managers in particular.

Finally, the literature has considered to what extent managers are able to make sense (for example, Katz and Khan 1978, Rouleau, 2005, Weick 1995, 2001) of the environment within which they both frame their own careers as well as manage policy in relation to other employees. As the paper will consider senior managers, it is worthwhile to bear in mind the observation by Herriot, Gibbons, Pemberton and Jackson (1994), that

> Where organizations are perceived as equitable in their management of careers, and where they have an explicit and working policy on career development, people are more satisfied with career management – but it helps if you are at a higher management level! (P117)

This review has set the background to the research on older senior managers' perspectives of age in the workplace. In doing so, it has highlighted the tensions between a social justice agenda to provide appropriate working environments for older workers, and the biological and psycho-social evidence for effective longer working lives. This agenda is supported by the economic case for longer working lives, but appears to be in opposition to workplace cultures, where ageism

remains prevalent. Furthermore, the need is not to amend, but to reverse the current tendency for early retirement. For this to happen, the workplace needs to be a more inclusive environment for older workers. With working lives framed around careers, the age and gender impacts on careers and new interpretations of career have been examined.

Research Themes

The research questions for this thesis were addressed on page 2. Arising from the literature review, the research themes for this thesis will be:

Age

Age and individual perception
How do senior managers perceive age in the workplace?

How do senior managers perceive the age of others in the workplace?

To what extent senior managers are the recipients of age discrimination in the workplace?

Age and workplace practice
Have senior managers been trained in discrimination and age discrimination?

What evidence is there that senior managers recognise, confront, accept, or promote age discrimination?

To what extent do managers use business case or social justice arguments in support of age – related practices?

Careers

Career, and the Psychological Contract
To what extent is age expected to, or actually has, changed older senior managers' psychological contracts?

Career, and Performance Management
How far do senior managers feel that their own contributions are recognised through the performance management experience?

Commitment, Values, Loyalty and Pride
How do Commitment Values and Organisational Pride affect older senior managers' career intentions?

Career Challenges: Resilience, Plateau and Burnout
How have managers responded to situations requiring resilience and what has been their experience of plateau and career burnout?

Ending of Career
What are managers' intentions and experience of ending of career?
What can be learned about older senior managers' careers against the classic career models of Super and Levinson et al?

Three Year Perspective
To what extent does a three year perspective of careers provide a different perspective of managers' careers?

This sets the background to the types of issues which will be examined in the field research. The thesis will now turn to address how a mixed research approach of both quantitative and qualitative research will be used to address the research question, and these research themes.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature review has shown that understanding age in the workplace is multi-dimensional, so that selectivity in research areas is required in order for the research span to be manageable. With the research themes in mind, this chapter will describe and explain the research methods adopted. It will consider the rationale for the research design approach, which is based on mixed research methods. The primary research was designed to understand the development of managers' experiences over time. Therefore, interview and questionnaire data were gathered in 2006, 2007, and 2009 to support the study, and give an insight into managers' career outcomes as well as their earlier career intentions. From secondary research sources, WERS 2004 survey material was used for additional analysis to position and understand the research findings within the context of wider UK populations. The longitudinal nature of the research also offered the opportunity to consider how legal challenges against organisations evolved following the implementation of the EE(A)R and provide for analysis using statistical information sourced from the Employment Tribunal Service, (ETS) 2006 to 2008.

The chapter explains how the primary research cohort of twenty-six senior managers from eleven different organisations was identified, and how the research was undertaken with them. Following a pilot review of a small number of senior managers, these managers contributed to questionnaires and semi structured interviews, conducted in 2006. The semi-structured interviews, were supported by themed questionnaires completed in 2006, 2007, and 2009.

All the research observed the research ethics requirements of the University of Bristol. In doing so, the research protected the anonymity and confidentiality of the research respondents, whilst also ensuring a transparent approach, so that

the results could be comprehensible, reliable and replicable by readers and other researchers.

3.2 Research Design

This section will develop and explore the research design which was adopted, and explain how I expected the specific research questions for the study to contribute to overall knowledge and understanding. My intention was to use independent and critical thought (Silverman, 2005) to develop concepts and methodologies; show that the research has been considered thoughtfully and critically; build on existing studies; and change direction and approach if research data pointed towards unexpected results (P70). I wanted my research to meet, so far as was practicable, traditional quality criteria of validity, reliability, replicapability, and generalisability, as well as alternative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman, Becker, and Sempik, 2008). Mellahi and Sminia, (2009) commented that advances in management knowledge in the previous two decades may have led to a 'ceiling effect, as current contributions are becoming dull, wrestling with hair–splitting issues and making only miniscule advances to the current stock of knowledge' (P3). However, in a paper calling for greater reflexivity within HRM, Janssens, and Steyaert (2008), recommend using reflectivity in research, and to 'use tensions among different perspectives to expose and connect different assumptions and to open up new ways of thinking' (P152). Therefore, it is my intention to ensure that the research is of value.

The research approach was developed to consider senior managers' attitudes by using a mixed research approach in which qualitative and quantitative approaches were used separately, and in combination, to provide deeper insight. My aim was for research findings which would develop existing knowledge with original findings of howt UK managers really perceived age in the workplace.

3.2 1 Research Themes

Age, Ageism and Age Discrimination

A review of the literature demonstrated that there is a rapid decline of UK employees from paid occupational employment after the age of 50 (OECD 2004), and an uneven distribution of age ranges between occupational sectors (National Statistics Labour Force Survey, 2004).

After seven years of voluntary measures to prevent age discrimination in the workplace (Code of Practice Age Diversity in Employment,1999), and six years after European Council directive 2000/78 requiring European Union member states to introduce legislation to prevent age discrimination in the workplace, the UK implemented the EE(A)R in October 2006. Alongside the legislative changes within the UK, research suggests ample and persistent evidence of age discrimination in the workplace, especially towards workers aged over 40, and over 50 (for example, Taylor, 2006, AGE 2004; Snape and Redman, 2003; Taylor and Walker, 1997, 1994;Vincent, 1999; Aaronson, 1966; Hassell and Perrewe, 1993; Ward, 1984; Langer,1982).

The literature review drew together a social construction frame for considering age in the workplace. Despite the stereotypes of older people, older age is often one of the most heterogeneous stages of life (Achenbaum, 2005), suggesting that older workers may have a wide divergence of work and life plans.

The possible research themes about possible ageism and age discrimination are extensive, and could have included younger, as well as older workers. However, the focal research for this study was to consider the UK legislative context on age discrimination since 2006, and how well prepared the older senior manager cohort was to recognise workplace age discrimination, and whether they actually did so in practice.

The specific research themes on age and age discrimination are:

Age and individual perception
How do senior managers perceive age in the workplace?

How do senior managers perceive the age of others in the workplace?

To what extent are senior managers the recipients of age discrimination in the workplace?

Age and workplace practice
Have senior managers been trained in discrimination and age discrimination?

What evidence is there that senior managers recognise, confront, accept, or promote age discrimination?

To what extent do managers use business case or social justice arguments in support of age –related practices?

Careers

The second area I explored was to re-examine perspectives of career in older senior managers, and to understand better whether and why senior managers were likely to conform to the patterns of reduced employment, as observed by OECD 2004.Here, some of the classic research on careers within a lifecourse context (for example, Super, 1990, 1980, 1957 and Levinson et al, 1978) also resonate with gerontology research on lifecourse (for example, Bengtson, Elder, and Putney, 2005). I wanted a clearer understanding on the nature of careers in later working life, and to understand the factors underpinning more recent career patterns, such as career plateau (for example, Ference, Stoner, and Warren, 1977; Morison, Erickson, and Dytchwald, 2006), career burnout (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach 1993; Burke, 1993 Schaufeli, Taris, van Rhenen, 2008), and ending of careers (for example, Crown, 1996; Moynagh and Worsley, 2004; McVittie, McKinley, and Widdicombe, 2003; Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). Finally, I

also wanted to understand to what extent perceived breach of psychological contract influenced senior managers' career decisions (Rousseau, 2001; Bal, De Lange, Jansen, and Van Der Velde, 2008). In these ways, I expected that these managers' attitudes to age in the workplace would be better illuminated through having understood how age had influenced their own career and retirement plans.

In my earlier study (Neugebauer 2004) and in the pilot interviews, I had been stuck by how frequently managers' work outlook was expressed in terms of commitment, loyalty, values, and their pride in their organisation, or in the affinity they felt towards members of their work groups. Linked with the theme of careers, this led me to question how these values may be modified with age, and to what extent they may impact on their intentions to continue to work, or to retire. The areas of better understanding of age and discrimination in the workplace both frame the context for the study on how older workers respond to age in the workplace, as well as provide the research opportunity for more detailed enquiry into how individual senior managers understand age and discrimination. In considering Values, Loyalty, and Organisational Pride, I was interested to understand the relationship between managers' beliefs and sense making within the organisation (Rouleau, 2005, Weick 1995, 2001), the extent to which they may moderate those values to fit with those of the organisation, (El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen, 2004), and how managers say Values, Loyalty and Pride fit with their overall career intentions as they grow older.

I was interested to look at primary data from the senior managers in my research group on affective, continuance, and normative commitment and consider how it influenced work commitment, job satisfaction, and desire to continue working (for example, Cole and Brunch, 2006; Meyer and Allen 1997; March and Mannari, 1998; and Wiener and Gechman, 1977).

The research themes on career are:

Career, and the Psychological Contract
To what extent is age expected to, or actually has, changed older senior managers' psychological contracts?

Career, and Performance Management
How far do senior managers feel that their own contributions are recognised through the performance management experience?

Commitment, Values, Loyalty and Pride
How do Commitment Values and Organisational Pride affect older senior managers' career intentions?

Career Challenges: Resilience, Plateau and Burnout
How have managers responded to situations requiring resilience and what has been their experience of plateau and career burnout?

Ending of Career
What are managers' intentions and experience of ending of career?
What can be learned about older senior managers' careers against the classic career models of Super and Levinson et al?

Three Year Perspective
To what extent does a three year perspective of careers provide a different perspective of managers' careers?

3.3 Research Method

3.3.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Options

The options in addressing the research method for primary research were quantitative (where the data are in the form of numbers), or qualitative where the data are not in the form of numbers (Punch 1986, P 4), or a mix of both methods, reflecting the subject category being researched. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) summarise the different approaches as:

> Qualitative research: uses ethnographic prose, historical narratives, first person accounts, still photographs, fictionalised 'facts', and biographical and autobiographical materials, among others
>
> Quantitative research: use mathematical models, statistical tables, and graphs, and usually write down their research in impersonal, third person prose. (P10)

Drawing also on Becker (1996, P 122ff) Denzin and Lincoln (2000) summarise the major differences between quantitative (positivism) and qualitative research (post positivism) as follows:

> Positivists seek to study, capture and understand realities; Post positivists argue that reality can be approximated, but never fully understood, so that multiple research methods are required;
> Positivist research methods are seen by qualitative researchers as but one way of telling stories about the social world;
> Both quantitative and qualitative researchers seek to understand the individual viewpoint, whilst qualitative researchers believe that they are better able to get closer to an understanding through detailed interviewing and observation, against much of quantitative research which is regarded as more remote and less able to capture research subjects' perspectives;
> Qualitative researchers are more likely than quantitative researchers to confront the constraints of the every day social world, whilst quantitative researchers step outside the everyday world.
>
> Qualitative researchers believe that it is possible to obtain rich data about the social world, whilst quantitative researchers become unconcerned with such detail as it interrupts the process of developing generalisations. (P8-10)

Therefore, despite the initially apparent clarity of differentiation between qualitative and quantitative research, there are tensions on the respective values of each approach. Bryman (1999) highlights the lack of clarity which can occur in selecting between qualitative or quantitative approaches, not least because of occasional confusion between the philosophical and technical issues considered in the superiority or appropriateness of one research method compared with another (P75). Furthermore, there is a tendency in critical literature for qualitative researchers to write about the advantages of either approach which have, he considers, tended to favour qualitative approaches. Bryman (1999) concludes that it is difficult to see a clear symmetry between epistemological positions such as phenomenology and positivism, and associated research techniques such as participant observation and social survey (P75). Fleetwood and Hesketh (2010) use 'critical realism' to see the workplace as an 'open system', characterised by multiplicity, and evolving aspects of human agency – so particularly complex to define causality. I proposed to address the research questions with mixed methods research, with the intention that, whilst recognising that the benefits and limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods were understood, the research conclusions could provide a richness and combination of insight through being both critical, but also analytical.

3.3.2 Quantitative Research

Some of the practical considerations of the quantitative (positivist) approach are that the observer must be independent, and that studies need to be value free, so that the results may be generalised. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) identify positivism/quantitative research as applicable where 'properties [of the social science world] should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection, or intuition' (P 28).

In this thesis, quantitative methods were used to analyse WERS and Employment Tribunal Services data, mainly by comparing and contrasting cross

tabular data. These data sets are either large samples (WERS 2004), or total census accounting information (Employment Tribunal Services), so that both can be considered to be generalisable. Quantitative analysis was also undertaken from questionnaire data from the senior manager respondents, and whilst these data reflected and gave deeper insight into the cohort, the small sample size meant that those results could not be considered to be generalisable.

3.3.3 Using WERS 2004 Data

The WERS survey (WERS 2004) was an obvious reference point and data base for a wide range of information about the UK work force in 2004. It is a valuable and renowned source of statistical information for which analysis has already been published, notably by Kersley, Alpin, Firth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge (2006), and one where additional analysis is readily facilitated by access to the original data bases. Furthermore, it is a wide scale survey, representing: 2295 managers (of which 416 met the 'senior manager' criteria used in this study); 22 451 employees; and 2295 workplaces. (Kersley, Alpin, Firth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge (2006), P7). Despite the value and reputation of WERS 2004, I also reflected on some of the shortcomings and doubts I may have had in relying on this source alone for the conduct of this research, and these are explored later in the Research Reflection section.

3.3.4 Qualitative Research

Whilst it was my intention to use quantitative research data from independent and generalisable sources (Gill and Johnson, 1991), I also wanted to use a qualitative (participant researcher) approach which would enable me to use my earlier experience, reflection and intuition as part of the research approach. Behind the use of the qualitative research in this way was a desire to find deeper meaning behind senior management beliefs and behaviours than I believed could be

achieved by quantitative data alone. Van Maanen (1983) describes such qualitative research as

> [Using] an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency (P 9)

This application of qualitative research helps to address those research questions which are particularly concerned with managers' real-life understanding and interpretation of issues such as age, discrimination, and career. Similarly, Mintzberg, in 1973, sought to understand how senior managers worked in reality, and considered seven different research approaches (See Appendix I) which could be employed. For Mintzberg, each of the possible research methods had benefits, but attendant disadvantages. Overall, I decide to adopt four of Mintzberg's approaches within this research, so as to achieve the depth and breadth of research required in this study. (See Table 18).

Method	Key Advantage(s)	Key Disadvantage(s)	Appropriate Use in Studies of Managers	Application to this older senior manager research?
Secondary Sources	Convenient; Draws on others' analysis	Data may not be available or inappropriate, or incomplete	Inaccessible managers	WERS 2004 ETS 2006-2008
Questionnaire and interview	Convenient	Data of questionable reliability	Perceptions of job	Extensively used; validity developed by using mixed research methods and status as participant observer
Critical Incidence and sequence of episodes	Allows for intense probing	Parts of job not covered by data	Some perceptions of job in depth	Critical incidents questions included in semi structured interview format
Diary	Efficient	Little help to understand new phenomena; some problems with interpretation; reliability	Large sample of differing jobs	Research notes (rather than a diary) maintained to supplement formal research methods

Table 18 Adaptation of Mintzberg's Methods to Study Managerial Work
Source: Based on Gill and Johnson (1991) P148

Three further research methods were used by Mintzberg (1973), but not used in this study. Those methods were Activity Sampling, Unstructured Observation, and Structured Observation (Appendix I): I recognised that these could give me additional data, but there would have been considerable practical problems with this. First was the challenge of permission for access to sampling and observation across the eleven organisations used within the study. Second, whilst these additional three research activities would have provided further depths of information, Mintzberg points out the very heavy time commitment

which was required, even for his small sample of five respondents, in contrast with the twenty six managers in this study.

In a study of the transition process of Spanish early retirees, Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008) highlighted the value of qualitative research which 'enables us to identify personal experiences and meanings that otherwise might have gone unnoticed' (P189). Similarly, my intention for the qualitative element of the senior managers' research was to identify factors in age and ageing which may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

3.3.5 Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis as Mixed Methods

My purpose in using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was to consider research topics from different viewpoints. Mixed research methods have been described by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) as a third research methodological movement (Px), and are defined by them as one in which qualitative and quantitative methods and approaches are used in questions, research methods, data collection and analysis and /or inferences (P711). Gill and Johnson (1991) point out that using combinations of research approaches may be regarded as multiple methods, linking methods, or triangulation, and that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably (P150). Denzin (1978) suggests that triangulation may be based on data triangulation (using a variety of data sources); investigator triangulation (several researchers); theory triangulation (using multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data); or methodical triangulation (using multiple methods to study a single issue).

The mixed research methods used in this research contain elements of Denzin's (1978) criteria for data, theory, and methodical triangulation. However, linking qualitative and quantitative data in these ways has been criticised as a research approach. For example, Mason, in Bryman and Burgess (1994) points to the challenge in developing the necessary technical competences to deal with data

which have different logical principles, despite the fact that most researchers feel more comfortable with qualitative or quantitative analysis (P 107). Similarly, once the data analysis has been undertaken, there is a concern about whether the weighting of the data should be regarded as equal, or weight given to one component at the expense of another (Bryman and Burgess, 1994, P 22, and Gill and Johnson, 1991, P151).

The advantages of using mixed methods were explored by Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2007) in quality of life research. Here, the benefits of mixed research methods were considered to have two goals: confirmation of results, and comprehension (Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2007)). In this sense, it is different from triangulation, which seeks confirmation of results using different data sets, whilst mixed methods seeks comprehension through a deeper understanding of results (Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2007) P147). Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2007) adapt Mitchell's (1986) interpretation of mixed methods, to show that mixed methods may use different research methods on their own to consider different research questions, or different research methods to address similar research questions. So as to ensure that the objectives of the research have been planned and considered, it is important, however, that mixed methods are used in a planned manner, and not as an arbitrary 'mix and match' (Morse, 2003, P191) fashion.

One outcome of using mixed methods may be that the qualitative and quantitative methods employed may lead to different research outcomes (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, P16). This may lead to valuable additional insight from research rather than be viewed as a limitation of the research approach. Indeed Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2007) found that using mixed methods did not always provide confirmation and comprehension to their research question. Similarly Perlesz and Lindsay (2003) were unsurprised that social science research complexity would mean that divergence of results may be more often expected than confirmation. Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks

(2007) concluded that where mixed methods failed to confirm results, it nevertheless could lead to new thinking in their own research (P154). Therefore, whilst it would be convenient in this research to find that data analysis led to results confirmation, I was also aware that the mixed research methods could give richer and deeper insight into my own research.

Bryman, Becker, and Sempik (2008) found widespread support amongst researchers for mixed methods research, but that this had to be justified as a rationale, using the advantages of mixed methods working effectively together, rather than add-ons (P273) or scatter gun (P274) to research approaches. In this way, mixed methods draw together the advantages, and also some of the drawbacks of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative and quantitative research approaches themselves have separate theoretical frameworks. Confidence in research outcomes, and the time and cost of using mixed methods will usually be higher than using one method alone. However, research outcomes will be enhanced where there is confirmation and comprehension, or, where there is not confirmation, this leaves the researcher to consider different explanations for the research outcomes, and so helps to develop new understanding, theory or explanations (Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks, 2007).

3.4 Research Samples

3.4.1 Primary Research Identification and Access

In designing my research sample for the qualitative elements of this research, I took account of the principles proposed by Kemper, Stringfield, and Teddlie (2003). These are for the sample to follow logically from the conceptual framework and research questions; for the sample to generate a thorough database of the phenomenon under study; the sample to allow clear inferences

to be drawn; for sampling strategy to be ethical; allow for the transfer or generalisability to other research; and to be efficient and practical (P275-276).

My access to a cohort of senior managers was considerably helped by the fact that I was a senior manager at the time I was seeking research respondents, and within the age range which I was researching. It was also important to recognise the realities of researching a population of senior managers, even when they had agreed to participate in the research. My expectation was that they were likely to be busy, so difficult to approach for an activity which is not part of their operational activity. Furthermore, they are unlikely to engage in a personal discussion about their inner most thoughts, experiences, and aspirations unless the research has credibility, or quickly establishes credibility during the interview. To illustrate the challenges of achieving this, Gill and Johnson (1991) described the difficulties which one researcher faced on approaching non-executive directors to participate in research, even when her father was one of the respondents, and had originally proposed the research (P 106). Similarly, Buchanan, Boddy and McCallum (1988) confronted the challenge of what should be done in the researcher's eye, and what could be done in practice:

> Fieldwork is permeated with the conflict between what is theoretically desirable on the one hand, and what is practically possible on the other...In the conflict between desirable and the possible, the possible always wins (P 53)

In order to have a balanced research cohort, I looked for managers in the 40 plus age range, from a variety of different organisational settings, and with a gender mix. I used a variety of approaches to find research respondents, ranging from work, social, and study colleagues, and then used snowballing to ask respondents who had agreed to take part in the research to suggest other respondents. As a result, of the twenty six respondents in the research cohort, fifteen respondents came from direct contact, ten from snowballing via

established contacts, and one from a conference meeting. One respondent was based in the north of England, one in the midlands, four in London and the south east, and the remaining twenty from the south west of England.

I wanted a range of organisations represented within the sample, so that the research findings could be based around a mix of organisation cultures and sectors. I wanted to avoid criticisms of other management research (for example, of Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee, 1978) that research had been limited only to one organisation. But balanced against this, I also wanted to ensure that my research cohort was not so dispersed across different organisations that no patterns or themes would be discernible. The final research sample (see Appendix J) was drawn from eleven different organisations, representing financial services (three different organisations, including one not-for-profit); three public sector organisations (comprising education, media, and civil service); four manufacturing sector companies; and one self employed. Of the twenty-six respondents, twelve came from the same financial services organisation.

Most research respondents were from the Managers and Senior Officials category (SOC 2000). Even so, the research sample deviates in two important respects. First, the sample also included two Headteachers of junior/middle schools, who would be classified within the Professional Occupations section of SOC 2000. Accurate identification of the definition of Managers and Senior Officials is important since it is the basis for later cross reference with the equivalent category within the WERS (2004) survey (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge, (2006) P 23). However, since the two Headteachers in the research cohort would be categorised as ' 2 Professional Occupations' within SOC 2000, their data could not be located and cross-referenced with WERS (2004) data for Managers and Senior Officials.

The second deviation from the research literature is that Whitley considers 'individual entrepreneurs working independently and not co-coordinating the work of others, as not functioning as managers' (P212). From the research cohort, one respondent is owner/director/manager of a small management consultancy. A second respondent is a director/owner to a medium sized family manufacturing business: the role of this respondent appeared to be more one of adviser to the other directors, rather than having direct line responsibilities. Nevertheless, all research respondents had responsibilities as defined by Mintzberg (1975), and so are considered to be legitimate roles to include within this study. The overall distribution of research respondents by industry sector and age are shown in italics Table 19.

Sector	*Organisations in Research Sample*	Age 16-24 (%)	Age 25-49 (%)	Age 50-59 (%)	Age 60 and over (%)
Agriculture, Mining, Fishing	-	21.1	58.0	14.7	6.3
Manufacturing	*[4]*	10.4	63.7 *[2]*	20.1 *[2]*	5.8
Construction	-	16.9	56.7	19.6	6.8
Distribution, Hotels, and Restaurants	-	32.5	48.1	14.4	5.0
Transport and Communication	-	11.4	63.4	19.9	5.2
Banking, Insurance, and Finance	*[3]*	13.4	66.9 *[10]*	15.5 *[4]*	4.2
Public Admin. Education, Health	*[3]*	7.7	63.8 *[2]*	23.4 *[3]*	5.1
Other Services	*[3]*	24.2	51.9 *[2]*	16.4 *[1]*	7.5
All Industries	*[11]*	15.7	60	19	5.3

Table 19 Sample location of organisation and age by UK industry sector
Source: National Statistics Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2004
[Italics: Numbers in Author primary research]

Senior Managers' Age Profile

The age profile for the senior managers is sixteen of the twenty (61.5%) in the 40-49 age range as at August 2006, and ten (38.5%) in the 50-60 age range; the mean age was 49.49 years. These results may be compared with UK managerial age distributions as follows in Table 20

Age Range (years)	Percentage of UK Managers (Based on Begum, 2004)	Percentage of Senior Managers in this research (Source, Author)
16-24	5	0
25-34	23	0
35-44	31	31
45-59*/64**	36	69
>60*/65**	5	0

Table 20 Estimated Age Distribution of UK Managers
*Men
**Women

Senior Managers' Gender Profile

The gender profile of the senior managers' research cohort was sixteen men (61.5%), and ten women (38.5%). In addition, senior managers were asked about their sexual orientation. Of the 16 men interviewed, two described themselves as gay, and of the 10 women interviewed, one was gay. All were living within stable relationships with partners, and of these three, one had been previously married so had additional responsibilities for dependent children.

Senior Managers' Salary Distribution

The salary distribution of the research cohort was higher than for UK managers overall (Appendix O). Managerial salaries vary considerably by sector, location, as well as levels of managerial responsibilities. However, the table shows in Column 3 that salary levels for senior managers in the qualitative research cohort are higher than the average national adjusted estimated levels, based on Begum (2004). Furthermore, salaries for women senior are typically in the lowest band (£40-70,000) of this research group, but with only two of the sixteen male managers in this salary band. This is not to suggest that women managers in the research sample are underpaid relative to men, but that they were likely to be in less senior roles than the male respondents.

Overall, the sample number in my research sample was appropriate to the aims of the study, and resources available. Furthermore, the research design, using mixed research methods, and gathering a range of data over three years meant that the sample met the design criteria suggested by Kemper, Stringfield, and Teddlie (2003), would provide the depth of insight I was seeking, and were practical for the resources at my disposal.

3.4.2 Secondary Research Sources

The main secondary data source used in this research was the Work Employment Relations Survey (WERS) 2004. The 2004 analysis is based both on researcher analysis of the data, and with reference to secondary research already undertaken by Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge (2006). The WERS 2004 survey follows previous surveys in 1998, 1990, 1984, and 1980. It is based on a sample of workplaces, selected at random from the Inter-Departmental Business Register, held by the Office of National Statistics. Workplaces are defined as the local unit, so that more than one 'workplace' may be represented for the same organisation. Data for the survey is collected from workplace managers, employee representatives, and employees themselves (Kersley, et al, 2006 P2-3).

The WERS 2004 survey was randomly abstracted from 700,000 workplaces, and stratified: all sizes of workplace were included, whilst larger workplaces were weighted to provide a greater probability of inclusion in the survey than smaller workplaces. In this way, the numbers employed in different sized workplaces were more realistically represented in statistically reliable comparisons. (Kersley, et al, 2006, P4). The fieldwork for WERS 2004 was undertaken between February 2004 and April 2005, and the numbers included in the survey are reflected in Table 21 below.

	Total Number of Responses	Response Rate (%)	Interview duration (minutes)
2004 Cross Section			
Survey of Managers	2,295	64	118
Survey of Employee Representatives	984	77	52 (union)
			43 (non union)
Survey of Employees	22,451	61	-
Financial Performance Questionnaire	1,070	51	-
1998-2004 Panel Survey			
Survey of Managers	938	75	42

Table 21 Participation Rates in the WERS 2004 Survey
(Source, Kersley, et al, 2006, P7)

The statistical analysis contained within Kersley, et al, 2006 is mainly cross-tabular (P 11), so showing the joint distribution of two or more variables. For the quantitative research conducted for this paper, cross tabular statistics will also be used predominantly in analysing WERS 2004 data.

The second source of quantitative material was taken from the Employment Tribunal Services Annual Reports (ETS) 2006-2008. These reports list all referrals to employment tribunal, where employees believe that their employment law rights have been breached.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Research with Senior Managers

My intention for the qualitative phase of the research was to understand the beliefs and opinions of the respondents. In the literature review, it was seen that the social construction approach to age which will be used in this part of the research, resists the basis that meaning is, by itself, objective. Indeed, Schwandt

(2000) continues that knowledge cannot be seen as disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but is in some sense ideological, political, and permeated with values ' (P198, and also Rouse, 1996). Schwandt (2000) observes that

> 'We do not construct our interpretations [of knowledge] in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth' (P917)

From an epistemological perspective, this presents the issue of how social construction may be identified in age research. Schwandt notes from Potter (1996) and Denzin (1997) that discourse is the 'material practice that constitutes representation and description' (P 197). Therefore, within this research, senior managers' social construction of age will be considered from the perspective of discourse and language used in discussing age, and analysed within perspectives of models of social construction of age in the workplace.

In the qualitative stages of this research, interviews were used to investigate the social construction of age, and as a basis for the analysis of language and discourse on age in the workplace. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2003) identify both semi-structured and unstructured interviews of being of value when 'It is necessary to understand the constructs that the interviewee uses as a basis for opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation' (P87). A semi structured interview format was used, based on the initial questions outlined in Appendix C. The interview was supported by completion of a bio data questionnaire (Appendix B), a Meyer Allen questionnaire (Appendix D); and follow up questionnaires were issued in 2007 (Appendix E) and 2009 (Appendix F).

In conducting the interviews, I was ready to adapt the interview with an emergent approach, altering the direction and content of respondents' discussion, recognising as Jones (1985) suggested

> In preparing for interviews, researchers will have, and should have, some broad questions in mind, and the more interviews they do, the more likely they are to use this grounded understanding to want to explore in certain direction, rather than in others (P47)

One of the aims of the interviews was to contribute to an understanding of senior managers' responses to age discrimination issues. In designing the interview approach, one challenge which needed to be considered was the willingness or reluctance of individuals to acknowledge where discrimination had been observed or personally experienced. Corning, (2002) suggests avoiding questions such as 'have you ever been discriminated against?', since 'most often [this] results in a flat 'no" (P 118). Research on Gender Discrimination and Ageist Perceptions (2006) also found that individuals, especially women, were unlikely to acknowledge discrimination in quantitative research, but were more inclined to do so in face to face interviews. Accordingly, the research questions related to discrimination were framed first to check that the respondent could define discrimination and its age components; then ask whether and what types of discrimination had been observed in the workplace, then finally to ask of the respondent's personal experience of age discrimination. In practice, it was found that this approach was less abrupt with respondents, and enabled them to think through both the technicalities of discrimination, as well as the recalled, and sometimes emotional perspectives, as they gave their responses.

3.5.2 Pilot Study

The planned interviews with senior managers were central to this research, and so needed careful planning. The research also followed on from research which I had previously undertaken (Neugebauer, 2004). Therefore, whilst I am professionally experienced with the range of interview skills and competences required to undertake this study, I recognised that I still needed to ensure that my research themes were appropriate and could be addressed in the manner I had planned. This was especially important since, as Easterby- Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) emphasise 'since depth interviews derive from a social construction perspective, it follows there is no one 'objective' view to be discovered which the process of interviewing may bias. However, there is a very real concern about the interviewers imposing their own reference frame on the interviewers' (2002, P 93). Similarly, Easterby- Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) underline the importance of establishing a social connection with interviewees. For example the questions the interviewer asks and how the interviewer responds will often depend on the way in which their situations are defined (P89); and appropriate language (P91).

Despite the desire to use interviews for this research, they are resource absorbing, and, as Gill and Johnson (1991) point out, interviews are more expensive and time consuming than other methods, and can lead to interviewer bias (P 79). In terms of access to senior managers for research, Easterby- Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) note that 'Managers are usually in a position where they can decline to provide information to researchers; they are also adept at handling face-to-face interviews and at managing interactions with strangers' (P59). Equally, they argue that 'direct contact with the subject of one's research is most important if one is to develop new insights' (P61). Here, I was fortunate to have had extensive professional experience of the work of senior managers, and with all types of interviews with managers.

I proposed to use both face to face, telephone interviews, and wrote notes as well as recorded the interviews. Recording was undertaken with the express consent of the respondents and, as with the experience of Gill and Johnson (1991 P 102), respondents appeared unaware of the recorder after only a few minutes.

The techniques employed within the semi structured interviews included basic, explanatory, focused, and silent probes; drawing out questions; ideas and suggestions; and mirroring and reflecting within the questioning techniques (Easterby- Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002, P 93). Throughout, I was open and honest about the reasons for the interviews, partly for ethical reasons, but also because being open about the reasons for the research may lead to spontaneous offers for help Gill and Johnson (1991), P105.

As I entered the interviews, I was also mindful of how I would later review and analyse them. Silverman (2005) points out that the challenge in interpreting interviews also presents two potential problems (P239): the first is the [questionable] stable reality or context (eg the 'organisation") to which people respond; and the second the gap between beliefs and actions between what people say and what they do (also Webb and Stimson, 1976 and Gilbert and Mulkay,1983). Similarly, McLeod (1994) cautions on the tendency for interviewees to 'provide answers which they think the counsellors and researchers will want to hear' P124-126). Furthermore, Jones (1985) observed that interviewees will often 'suss out' what interviewers are like and make their judgments from first impressions (cited Easterby- Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002, P89). It was also important to enter interviews with a discerning frame of mind: Sims (1993) notes that being able to recognise when an interviewer is being misinformed is an important part of the interview process (P90). It would also be important to consider senior management respondents as not an aggregation of disparate individuals without social interaction between them (Bryman, 1998, P39). Finally, I also took advice from Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, (2002) not to be over anxious to gather all the data in one go (p91). In part, this

recognised the time commitment for the duration of the interview, which I had given to senior manager research respondents; however, my invitation to them to participate in the research included a request to contact them over the three year cycle of the research, so additional data could be gathered then if necessary.

Therefore, I undertook a pilot to try out research techniques and methods to see how well they work in practice and modify plans as necessary (Blaxter, Tight and Hughes, 2001, P 42 and P135). This pilot was conducted with three managers who would not be part of the final research study. The pilot enabled me to refine the research themes and semi structured interview questions, helped me to understand how I would manage the content and logistics of the questionnaires and interviews, and gave an indication of the time I would need to conduct the interviews. For example, I was able to ensure that maximum use was made of the pre-interview questionnaires for purely factual information (age, salary, etc); for the interviews themselves, I also learned to manage respondents' time on individual answers, since without this, it would be difficult to complete all questions in the time available.

3.5.3 Quantitative research

The interviews were supported by questionnaires to the research cohort, based on: Bio Data and Initial Senior Manager Questionnaire (Appendix B) : Work commitment. Meyer and Allen Work Commitment Questionnaire (Appendix D) ; Senior Managers' Supplementary Question Form, Summer 2007 (Appendix E) ; Senior Managers' Supplementary Questions 2009 (Appendix F);

The primary research data was supported with secondary data analysis from the WERS 2004 survey, and supporting questionnaire (Appendix H) and the Employment Tribunal Services Annual Reports (ETS) 2006-2010. These sources allowed consideration of to what extent the research findings may be considered across other UK senior managers.

3.5.4 Timing of Data Collection

The research was undertaken over a period of thirty six months, between summer 2006 and summer 2009 The EE(A)R were implemented in October 2006.

3.5.5 Recording and Interpreting Interviews

Interviewees gave their permission for the interviews to be recorded and transcribed in response to my letter (Appendix G), and all interviews were therefore recorded in this way, prior to more detailed review, reflection, and analysis of key themes. During the interviews, I also took brief notes of key points in the discussion, and particular incidents or circumstances which I thought would be relevant later.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Overall Approach

Both at the design stage of the qualitative research approach, and at the time of presenting the research findings, I wanted to ensure that the qualitative data provided a rich and thoughtful insight into how senior managers responded to age. Where possible, it was my intention to relate the quantitative data findings of my own research cohort to wider studies. In this section, the data analysis approach to achieve these aims is summarised in the Table 22, and then discussed further.

Research Cohort	Research Approach	Data Analysis Approach
Research cohort: Older Senior Managers, aged 40-59 **N=26**	1Bio Data and Initial Senior Manager Questionnaire (Appendix B) 2. Semi structured interviews (Appendix C) 3.Work Commitment questionnaire (Meyer and Allen 1993 (Appendix D) 4 Three WERS questions (C1) on 'Your views on working here (Appendix H) 5. Senior Managers' Supplementary Questions 2007(Appendix E) 6. Senior Managers' Supplementary Questions 2009(Appendix F)	1. Data summary charts and cross Tabulations 2. Transcripts themed to research question themes and literature 3. Cross tabulation analysis 4. Cross tabulation analysis 5. Cross Tabulation Analysis 6. Cross Tabulation Analysis
Wider UK Senior Manager Population	Quantitative: WERS 2004 data Employment Tribunal and EAT Statistics (GB) 1 April 2006 to 31 March, 2010	Cross Tabulation Analysis Cross Tabulation Analysis

Table 22 Overall Approach to the Data Analysis

3.6.2 Qualitative Data

My aim with the qualitative data was to look in detail at how senior managers responded to age, and then to relate it back to the literature review, so as to deepen the understanding and relevance of the literature, and, where possible, find new insights. The interviews were transcribed. I then gave further consideration to what tools I would use to analyse the content, and what methods would be most appropriate for the analysis. Consistent with advice from Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and Silverman (2005), reflection on research data, and preliminary analysis of that data started at an early stage in the study and there

were periods when literature review preparation and research field work and review were undertaken in parallel.

For the complete analysis of the qualitative research, it was tempting to use computer based software to analyse the interview transcripts, using programmes such as CAQDAS, NVivo, and ATLAS. Despite the attractiveness of the speed of using software for this purpose, a number of researchers I spoke to cautioned of the need to avoid overlooking codes or themes in this process, and therefore missing analytical frames as a result. Indeed, Mason, in Bryman and Burgess (1994) points out that computers

> Cannot perform the creative and intellectual task of devising categories, or of deciding which categories or types of data are relevant to the process being investigated, or what is meaningful comparison (P108).

Furthermore, although the interview transcripts ran into approximately four hundred pages, they were for twenty-six respondents, and this made them more manageable than had I being analysing a large number of interview documents. Therefore, I preferred to undertake this analysis manually, which enabled me to read and keep re-reading and analysing the texts against different themes and topics which I wished to explore.

I also considered the most appropriate approach to analyse the content of the interview transcripts. The first step was to analyse the interview transcripts, and identify general themes from the literature review (Willms, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994), then to develop further themes and sub themes in more depth. However, the approach to coding is an interpretive and analytical process (Miles and Huberman, 1994, P56), and requires the researcher to be alert to the themes which are both obvious and emergent from the research data. Once the themes had been identified, the interview transcripts, and, on occasion, the original audio recordings, were analysed against those themes in order to build the analysis.

3.6.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from WERS 2004 was analysed and the focal areas of research using the WERS 2004 research questionnaire (Appendix H) were to consider:

Values, Loyalty, and Organisation Pride (WERS Question C)

- By all UK employees
- By all UK senior managers
  - By gender
  - By age

Satisfaction with achievement, initiative, influence, training, job security, and work satisfaction (WERS Questions 8a-8g). In order to provide information from the WERS 2004 which could be compared on a like for like basis with the primary research of senior managers, it was necessary to adapt the WERS 2004 data in two ways. First, the age band for WERS (shown in Appendix H) were amended as a set of variables to band of age 20-29; 30-39;40-49;50-59; 60-64; and over 64. Second, WERS 2004 does not show occupation or professional group: therefore, as a proxy for senior manager, the variables were adjusted to provide information only for those WERS respondents who answered positively to both question E13 ('Do you supervise other employees?'), and question E15, ('salary greater than £ 45, 241'). It is recognised that these two criteria do not prove senior management as a respondent's occupation, but will give a close approximation for this category.

Quantitative measures for Organisational Values, Loyalty and Pride were based on the WERS (2004) questionnaires (Appendix H), and specifically related to the three questions in C1 'Your Views on Working Here'. To ensure that the results of the questionnaires could be compared with those of the WERS survey, the ratings scales in my own research questionnaires were converted to numbers on the same basis as used for WERS, with '5' representing strongly agree, down to

'1' for strongly disagree. In addition, WERS 2004 data were used to analyse senior managers' and employees' satisfaction by age for achievement, initiative, influence, training, pay, job security, and satisfaction (WERS 2004, Question A8)

Research Design in Summary

The overall research design, data collection and timing are summarised against the research categories to which they refer, as shown in Table 23 below. The table shows the sample sizes, timing, and areas of research. The columns also show the corresponding research instruments used in the data collection, and the corresponding ways in which data collection was aligned with individual areas of research.

Research Design Used					
	Bio Data and Initial Senior Manager Questionnaire (Appendix B) Semi Structured Interview format (Appendix C)	Meyer and Allen Work Commitment Questionnaire (Appendix D)	Senior Managers' Supplementary Question Form, Summer 2007 (Appendix E)	Senior Managers' Supplementary Questions 2009 (Appendix F)	Secondary Research
Sample Size	26	26	26	26	WERS 23, 053, of which senior managers, 416 ETS 100% of cases
Timing of research	Summer 2006	Summer 2006	Summer 2007	Summer 2009	Summer 2009
Use of Research Sources by Research Area					
Discrimination	•		•		ETS 2006-2008
Career	•	•	•	•	
Commitment	•	•			
Values Loyalty and Pride	•			•	WERS 2004 Question C1
Work satisfaction	•			•	Question A 8, WERS 2004)

Table 23 Research Methods Used, by Research Area

3.7 Ethics

3.7.1 Introduction and Code of Practice

I needed to ensure that my research approaches were conducted in an ethical manner so as to ensure the integrity of the research evidence, and to avoid damage to the research respondents. Considering the range of ethical issues which could affect research, Bell and Bryman (2007) identified the following categories: avoidance of harm to the participants, respecting the dignity of the respondents, ensuring informed consent to participate, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, avoidance of deception in the research process, the need to declare any affiliation which could affect the research, honesty and transparency, reciprocity for the research to be of benefit to researcher and respondent, and the need to avoid misrepresentation (P 71). For this research, I considered that the key issues to be addressed were the respondents' consent to participate in the research, how confidentiality would be maintained, my own proximity to the research group, and the political implications of the research.

Collins (2000) commented that it was unlikely that individual researchers could, alone, determine all elements of ethical research behaviour without the use of ethical guidelines and frameworks. Therefore, I adopted the University of Bristol (2009) research ethics registration.

3.7.2 Consent to participate in the research

It was important that research respondents not only gave their consent to participate in the study, but did so on the basis that they understood, in broad terms, the purpose of the research, and that neither the researcher nor the respondent expected that it would harm the respondent (Bell and Bryman,2007). For example, Cassell (1982) commented that this could include ensuring that respondents were not exposed to the possibility of unwanted and unasked-for self knowledge. To confirm formally their agreement to participate in this

research, respondents were advised in writing of the background to the research, and how it would be conducted, and asked to confirm their agreement to participate. All questionnaires also requested formal consent from respondents that their data could be used in the research (Appendices B to G).

3.7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Bell and Bryman, (2007) point out that although confidentiality and anonymity are often treated as overlapping concepts, there is a distinction between them: confidentiality relates to the protection of information supplied by research respondents from other parties, whilst anonymity protects the individual's identity or organisation by concealing their names and identity (P69). I assured interviewees that all recordings and data, information, and interpretations would be stored and used in such a way as to ensure that individual identity could not be realised or deduced. All respondents were assured that the interviews would be held in confidence, so that their identities would be neither explicitly stated, nor deducible from information in the research findings. Interview respondents were given a written assurance to this effect (Appendix G).

3.7.4 Proximity to the Research Group

A further area of ethical concern related to my proximity to the research group: first, to the extent that I was potentially being invited to intrude into their lives, and secondly the social proximity I had with many respondents which had often enabled me to obtain access to interviews in the first place. Oakley (1988) reminds us that

> Ethical dilemmas are generic to all research involving interviewing...But they are greatest where there is the least social distance between the interviewer and the interviewee. Where both share the same gender

> socialization, and critical life experiences, social distance can be minimal (P 55)

On the other hand, social proximity has provided the benefit of access to research respondents, and the ability to get close to their stories, reinforcing the opportunity for participant research (Gill and Johnson, 1991). This also enables me the opportunity to bring my 'cultural self' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992) to the research. Krieger (1991) argued that using the self is actually fundamental to qualitative research, and as a former senior manager at the time of the interviews, I would no longer be seen as a 'troublesome element, to be eradicated or controlled', but rather as a set of resources (Olesen, 2000 P 229).

In conducting and analysing research interviews, these factors meant that I had considerable resources available to me. Equally, I recognised the responsibility to ensure that they were used ethically and objectively, and to be especially careful that my code of confidentiality was maintained.

3.7.5 Politics

Here, 'political' is intended to refer to the subtlety by which personal and organisational influence or power, or simply personal interest, may influence the respondent or the researcher. Rather than a rational and methodical research frame, Pettigrew (1985) describes the political research maze starkly as 'Muddling through, incrementalism, and political process' (P 222). Easterby-Smith, Taylor and Lowe (2003) underline the challenges of understanding, and seeing through, politics in research interviews

> First it is important to recognise that power and political issues will be significant even when, or perhaps especially when, they are not obviously present. Second, there are no easy answers, nor solutions, to the political web. It exists in the form of ideologies, of personal interests (including those of the researchers) of power differences, and of ethical dilemmas (P 80)

Similarly, the potential obscurity and obfuscation in conducting and interpreting any research interviews is made by Oakley (1981), who noted that, 'interviewing is rather like marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, yet behind each closed door there is a world of secrets' (P 31). Overlaid within this is that the social construction approach to the research which needs to take acknowledge that the senior managers will themselves be going through their own process of active sense making.

These caveats do not invalidate qualitative research, but they do reinforce the importance of approaching, conducting, and analysing interview results with a realistic and discerning framework, and contrasting the results with other research interviews within the same cohort, and other research methods and findings. The resulting narratives from the cohort of senior managers were deep and thoughtful. This belief was subsequently reinforced during the interview phase of research by the number of research subjects who said and intimated

during their interviews that they had not previously reflected in any depth about the topic areas we were discussing. Indeed, for some respondents, the questions clearly raised good and bad memories about work experiences and family difficulties, success and failure of career ambitions, personal serious illness, marriage break up, coming to terms with same gender sexual orientation, and the death of parents, partners and children. Little wonder therefore, that several interviews were punctuated by tearful or reflective interludes of participants, and at times I needed to remain with respondents a little longer at the end of the interviews, whilst respondents recomposed themselves. At the conclusion of the interview phase of the research, I was confident that I had a real insight into the motivation and aspirations of a majority of research respondents, and a more discerning assessment where a minority of interviewees appeared to have told me either what they appeared they wanted me, or they themselves, to believe.

In contrast to the sensitivities and politics of the interview data, the quantitative data from the WERS 2004 survey may be considered at first appearance to be apolitical, since the research based on the WERS (2004) data represent a population of over 2,000 managers (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge, 2006 P7), of which 416 matched similar criteria for senior managers as used in the qualitative research. This can be said to represent a statistically significant result, and therefore can be considered to be generalisable. However, whilst it provides a context for the research, the data from the WERS survey provides less detail and insight than the qualitative analysis. Furthermore, it assumes that the responses to the WERS questionnaires are undertaken in a rational, honest, and informed manner. My personal experience at organisational level of managing the completion of WERS questionnaires as a senior manager is that such an assumption needs to be treated with caution, as will be discussed further in the section on expected limitations of research method, below. Nevertheless, the results of the WERS analysis give us insight into how managers think on a national scale, and provide wide context to the cohort of twenty-six senior managers.

3.8 Expected limitations of research method

3.8.1 Scope

The research has been scoped to focus on managers in the 40-60 age range, and their attitudes towards age. Begum (2004) notes that 5% of managers are aged 60-65, and that in the age bands 16-44, 59% of managers are represented. Therefore, by considering only senior managers in the 40-60 age band, this research has considered only a segment of UK managers. The senior managers interviewed were those currently in paid occupational employment: given the reduction in employment rates for those aged over 50 (OECD, 2004), it would have been interesting to consider senior managers within the age range of 40-60 who were not currently employed, and contrast their responses with those of the employed group.

Similarly, the range of themes for this proposed research is wide, and in selecting age and career, it is acknowledged that some themes considered important have been omitted. For example, the literature review has identified earlier research that early retirement decisions may also be framed around a variety of personal, psychosocial, organisational, and social reasons (Crego, de la Hara, and Martinez – Inigo, 2008). Earlier research has also highlighted the significance of health, work attitudes, organisational context, and personal finance (for example, Henkens and Tazelaar, 1994, Shultz, Morton, and Weckerle, 1998, and Mein and Ellison, 2006). Whilst these themes are important, they have not been included in the detailed field research of this study, where the focus is on older age and career, rather than retirement per se.

3.8.2 Sample Size

The research sample size of twenty-six senior managers for the qualitative research was not a high number, but should be considered on the validity of the

research approach(es) used, and basis of the depth of the data and the knowledge and insight which has been obtained. In comparison with this research, some eminent and frequently cited research has had similarly small research cohorts – Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee's (1978) study of careers and life stages was based on forty respondents, Hofstede's (1980) research on culture was based on a minimum number of twenty per country (but allowed to reduce lower than this), whilst Marshall's (1995) study of women managers was based on a qualitatively rich investigation of sixteen women. Even smaller than these research samples, Mintzberg's seminal work on the senior manager's role (1973), was based on five respondents. As with this study, the depth of the study and investigation of the lives of individual respondents became more important in examining their lives than larger research samples.

The samples of managers in the survey were 'convenience samples' – senior managers to whom I had access, rather than chosen randomly. This included two important potential limitations – first a research bias that I might only include senior managers who I felt would consent to be interviewed, because of personal relationships, or because I felt that they may be interested to give their time to be interviewed; second, that I only approached people I knew or encountered, so that I only considered people from within my own 'world view'. However, whilst I knew, or was acquainted with seventeen of the respondents, I had no previous knowledge of the remaining nine. Furthermore, of twenty seven people I approached to be interviewed, only one declined to follow through with in depth interviewing, and this was in response to my error with the interview administration arrangements, not an unwillingness to participate in an in depth interview.

A further consequence of the convenience approach to identifying research respondents was that the sample stratification and number of respondents in the research cohort could be further improved – for example by only concentrating the research on financial services, from which a majority (59%) of respondents

came in any case; or by achieving a more balanced and widespread industry sector distribution of respondents. This would have given more face validity to the research cohorts. However, it is unlikely to have added significant variation to the research findings: for example, of the twenty-six respondents, only three respondents from the not-for-profit sector, and three from financial services showed an active awareness and engagement with age which was absent in the remaining twenty respondents.

3.8.3 Generalisability

In the qualitative research, neither the sample size of the research cohort, nor the method of selecting research participants can be claimed to be generalisable for quantitative statistical purposes. However, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) observed that even though results may not be generalisable in the statistical sense, this is not to say that they we should automatically assume that they are not valid elsewhere

> Although one must always be mindful of the fact that research interviews are particular social contexts and that extrapolation from them is always problematic, one should also recognise that the narratives and reminiscences that are produced in interview are not necessarily unique to that context (P 78)

Therefore, whilst the qualitative elements of this research could not be considered to be generalisable, the results would be most unlikely to be unique to my research cohort. The results would be valid and in depth for my chosen research population, and valid for consideration and investigation in alternative research settings.

In the quantitative research based on WERS 2004, the results, based on studies of 23,053 employees in total, and 416 of equivalent senior management

responsibility. can be said to be generalisable (but see also limitations of research). The analysis for the ETS data was taken from full census data, so included all claims and outcomes managed at Employment Tribunals. Quantitative data from the senior managers' cohort bio data and Meyer and Allen work commitment questionnaire are valid for the individuals which they represent, but are based on small, non-random samples and cannot, therefore, be generalised more widely.

3.9 Reflections on the Research Approach

3.9.1 Reflexivity as Researcher

The importance of reflexivity in research is underlined by Janssens, and Steyaert (2008), which aims to understanding the frameworks, conditions, assumptions and priorities, brought to a research project by the researcher (P 151). Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley, (2008) identify reflexivity as

> 'research that turns back upon and takes account of itself to explore the situated nature of knowledge; the institutional, social, and political processes whereby research is conducted and knowledge is produced; the dubious position of the researcher; and the constructive effects of language'(P 480).

Within a multi voicing set of reflexivity practices, Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley, (2008) note that, the researcher is recognised as part of the research project, so that it becomes necessary for the researcher both to 'declare [their] authorial personality' (P484), and to explain the steps taken to present the research work as meaningful. Similarly, in considering reflexivity as positioning practices (Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley, 2008), they note how networks, beliefs, practices and interests lead to interpretation, and how one interpretation rather than another predominates (P485).

Positioning practices in reflexivity also recognises the way in which research and researcher are 'influenced by the shared orientations of a particular research community', whose conventions 'not only conceal but actively misrepresent the complex and diverse processes involved in the production and legitimation of scientific finding' (Mulkay, 1992, P69, cited by ' Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley, (2008), P488). In this section, therefore, both my positioning as a researcher and my reflections having completed the research are explored.

I neither expected, nor found, that the research phase would be an uncluttered, linear process, in which research questions would present themselves to me in an obvious manner, with a group of respondents attendant for my next set of questions, nor find secondary resources which would easily meet my requirements. Indeed, Pettigrew (1985) describes the research process as '[more] characterised by ... incrementalism, and political process than as rational, foresightful, goal directed activity' (P222). Gilll and Johnson (1991) equally point out that even amongst established researchers, the practicalities of research funding are more important to the research approach used than may be more usually acknowledged (P144). However, for a more methodical framework for analysing the research, I was drawn to Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong (2000) who identified ten key questions (Appendix M) at the conclusion of any social research assignment, and I have taken account of that framework in this refection.

Reflecting on the research method at this stage, I considered separately the validity of the research method; the conduct of the research; Age and gender in this research; my own role as a researcher; and my learning for future research.

3.9.2 Validity of the Research Method

Mallahi and Sminia (2008) noted from Quinn (1980) and Pettigrew (1985) that organisational strategy formation tended to be a process in which 'internal politics, organizational culture and/or management cognition had the upper hand', so that observers of research in strategic management (such as Whittington 1996, and Jarzabkowski, 2005) had more recently focussed on the people (and in this case, senior managers), who practised strategic management [strategy-as-practice] in their daily roles (P3-4). Similarly, my work experience and previous studies led me to believe that in determining how organisations would develop age diversity strategy in the workplace, politics, organisation culture, and management thinking would have importance in this research, and so would have an important bearing on my proposed research approach, and the justification for using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research approaches.

In research on how researchers themselves viewed different quality criteria for research methods, Bryman, Becker, and Sempik (2008) found wide support for quantitative methods, for their validity and reliability (90% and 85% respectively), and less confidence in generalisability and replicatability (71% and 60% respectively, P265) and that quantitative data would be explicit, transparent, and understandable by a wide range of users of research. On the other hand, qualitative research was considered to be much weaker on these traditional quality criteria, especially with Reliability (56.6%), and Replicapability and Generalisability scoring 31.9% and 30.7% respectively. In the same research, 82% of researchers felt that traditional and alternative research criteria were satisfied in mixed research methods. This supports my rationale for using mixed methods research, provided, of course, that it has been properly designed and implemented.

3.9.3 Conduct of the Research

The main challenge in conducting the research was the conduct and approach to the interviews with the senior managers. These were undertaken face to face, or in some cases, by telephone. Since I was conducting semi structured interviews, and seeking to depth probe within those interviews, I had expected that telephone interviews may have been deficient compared with face to face meetings, since there was no opportunity to establish a close relationship with the respondent, nor to observe non verbal signals which may have helped me progress the lines of discussion. In practice, I did not find that telephone interviews were inferior to face to face interviews; indeed there were examples where respondents seemed both comfortable and reflective on the telephone, and may have been more candid than in a face to face interview.

Recognising that research respondents would often be busy, interview respondents were told that the whole process would last no more than one hour. During the interviews, I monitored time carefully, so as to keep to this commitment. The shortest interview was approximately forty minutes, and the longest one hundred and ten minutes. In comparison, research for managers in WERS 2004 took between forty two minutes and one hundred and fifteen minutes (Source, Kersley, et al, 2006, P7). In several cases, I told respondents that we had completed the agreed hour, and offered to stop, even though not all areas had been covered. However, in all cases where this happened, respondents indicated their desire to continue the conversation, and said that they were finding the subject matter interesting and thought provoking.

3.9.4 Age and Gender

This research has not considered age in combination with other characteristics which are circumvented by law (for example, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation). The introduction of the Equality Act 2010, S14, now means that the

'dual characteristics' of direct discrimination (for example, age and gender discrimination) may now be challenged in law. Similarly, in academic research, De Beauvoir's (1972) original conceptualisation of gender and double jeopardy have been further investigated to consider how different forms of social inequality may combine (for example, through a combination of gender, with ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and class) to lead to 'intersectionality'. This concept was originally developed by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) and Collins (1986, 1998, 2000) and subsequently developed in the setting of employment (notably by Acker, 2006; Bradley, 2007; Bradley and Healy, 2008; Walby, 2007, 2009). In particular, Walby (2007) postulates that different inequalities change the nature and impact of the individual discrimination components, so that to add in equalities together to assume a total equality experienced by an individual is an oversimplification. In career, Duncan and Loretto (2004) observe that concepts of the chronology of career are male dominated, and fail to take account of differences in women's careers and lives, most notably in relation to child bearing (P99). Moen and Han (2001) note that whilst the concept of career is central to our social beliefs and behaviours, career has been 'a heavily male gendered [concept], rather than [reflecting] women's experiences' (P426). Therefore, the importance of age and gender as a research topic is fully recognised (as is age, and other protected characteristics such as ethnicity, disability). This research sought to gain a better understanding of senior managers and age, but has not taken account of the impact of gender, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Later research can extend upon this research by considering the additional components of age and gender for both men and women in senior management roles.

3.9.5 Role as a Researcher

My personal interest in this topic has developed from my practical experience as a senior human resources manager in a large organisation, and my own earlier study (Neugebauer 2004).I have had career experience in a public sector

organisation, and long service with a large private sector organisation, and a more recent portfolio of roles, including running a small human resources management consultancy. With this, I already had personal and professional experience of many of the types of issues which senior managers may be facing. Whilst this gave me the opportunity for additional insight, understanding, and access to the research population, I also recognised that it could be a potential source of bias.

Gill and Johnson (1991) consider the researcher from four different participant/observer perspectives (see Appendix L). However, my own role could be more closely defined as participant researcher. Gill and Johnson's (1991) describe the role of the participant researcher as to

> Participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and thus become a member of their group, organization and community. This enables the researcher to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening, but also feeling it (P 109)

This social proximity enabled me to get close to the research respondents, to find and engage them in this study, but also to get close to their stories. In this way, I was able to bring my 'cultural self' to the interviews (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). A minority of the research cohort were senior management friends, but approximately half were senior managers with whom I had no previous professional contact. Even so, respondents spoke with candour, and as Olesen (200) observed, the fact that we no longer had working relationships would mean that I was no longer a 'troublesome element to be eradicated or controlled', but rather a resource (P 229). As Krieger (1991) would argue, using the self in research is actually fundamental to qualitative research, and I was well positioned to follow this proposition.

Citing Madge (1953), Gill and Johnson observe that participant research can be very successful in 'capturing reality in flight' by experiencing the often hidden experience of members [of the research cohort]. (P 199). My semi structured interview process sought to identify the current 'reality', but also to contextualise it in the lifecourse of those managers' career experiences. Of course, I cannot claim to 'participate fully' in the lives of the senior management cohort, with their diversity of organisational backgrounds. However, as a former senior manager with managerial experience similar to many of those I interviewed, I was well placed, both to access a research cohort, and also to understand the issues and pressures which they encountered in their managerial lives, in a manner which may not have been so apparent, or accessible, to another researcher.

In semi structured interviews, I sometimes had to remain with respondents longer than planned, in order to allow them to regain their self composure. At other times, I have given information to respondents to enable them to follow up learning opportunities (two cases went on to do higher degrees following our discussions); information on pensions for a co-habiting gay couple (one case); advice for respondents' children on higher education (one case); and multiple cases where respondents asked me how to make the transformation to a life outside the organisation where they had developed their careers, or the perceived little likelihood of successfully finding a further career move 'at their age'. In these ways, it was not possible to have interviewed these senior managers without them coming to terms with new self knowledge or self insight. In the follow up research conducted in 2009 (three years after the original interviews), several managers had clearly recalled what they had said in our discussions, and referred back to that in their reply to the 2009 questionnaire (Appendix F).

I found it revealing, and at times painful, to hear respondents talk of discriminatory situations based on age, and yet they could not explicitly realise or recognise what they were saying about ageism in their workplace and the impact it had on their working lives and careers. In this way, even these well educated

and otherwise perceptive senior managers, appeared to filter out information which potentially marked them as 'different' from their younger colleagues.

For me, too, I gradually understood both in others and in relation to myself that older workers frequently deny that age stereotypes apply to themselves personally, but do apply to others (Vincent, 1999, Ward, 1984). And in this is the dilemma for older workers – whether to remain in paid employment and passively accept age discrimination; or believe that there is little fresh opportunity for personal career growth after the age of 50; to assert the right to be actively considered for promotion and to be listened to as an effective manager, without reference to age; or to opt for early departure from full time paid employment, and so not to 'stupidly forget our mortality and put off sensible plans to our fiftieth and sixtieth years' as Seneca had commented up, two millennia ago (Seneca, 5 BC-AD65, P5). This leaves open the question that if senior managers over the age of 50 are, at best, ambivalent about their own age image, how can they be expected to work in a non discriminatory role to champion the rights of others with a similar age?

In the semi structured interviews, my intention was to 'depth-probe', defined by Douglas (1976) as

> 'while in the natural setting, but instead of going native, [the researcher] remains latently committed to being a researcher, and comes back to reflect and report upon the experience...Depth probes are vital in getting at deeper, more secret aspects of social life, those about which members would not talk or possibly even think. In these forms the researcher's knowledge of his *(sic)* own feelings becomes a vital source of data' (P16)

As Douglas (1976) and Gill and Johnson (1991) caution, the participant researcher may internalise respondents' culture and views to such an extent that they 'go native' (Gill and Johnson, 1991, P 110) and become so subjective that

the researcher's ability to take a dispassionate view is undermined. Therefore, there is a balance to be achieved by the participant researcher of getting behind the rhetoric and evasion, and not getting so close to the subject or the topic that analytical insight is lost. However, more recently, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to the issue of going native as no longer of interest to social researchers, and that such concerns were both about political correctness and demonstrated 'our [researcher] conceits as field workers' (P1057). Instead, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) see the role of the researcher not as seeking to demonstrate that they can live respondents' lives, but that 'we have lived close enough to them to begin to understand how the people who live those lives have construed their worlds' (P1058).

At the time the research interviews were under way, I had left my employing organisation, so my 'participant researcher' status as a former 'native' became modified. It may then be noted as being more like an 'expatriate', having lived in the organisation, been imbued with the role, customs, rewards, and frustrations of being a senior manager, but now living away. Indeed, as if to demonstrate my proximity to some of the senior managers being interviewed, one (Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 54) said to me during an interview eighteen months after I had left the organisation,'*...Perhaps I shouldn't say that because of course you're now independent of this, aren't you?*'. This supported the research approach that I had 'lived the lives' of the senior managers, and whilst there was always the possibility of bias and being duped (Douglas, 1976, P57), I could also exploit 'for all that it is worth' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, P18) deep reflection and objectivity on the research questions and data.

I do not claim that I could 'participate fully' in the lives of the senior managers' research cohort across their individual worlds, functional, sector, and domestic lives. But as a senior manager with a similar managerial background to many of those in the research cohort, I was well placed to understand the issues and pressures which they encountered in their managerial careers, in a way which

may not have been so apparent to someone whose role was observation alone. Through my senior management experience, I had participated in the types of lives and activities which senior managers had experienced. By using semi structured interviews, I was well placed to capture 'reality in flight' for my cohort of older senior managers.

3.9.6 Reflection on the use of WERS 2004

WERS 2004 was an important data base with which to explore wider implications of age in the working population, for reasons already discussed. However, in reflecting on the overall research approach, I also considered the validity of WERS 2004: despite its benefits, I saw three key areas of learning for future research.

First, the timing of the survey, 2004, was two years before the implementation of the EE(A)R. If the publicity, organisational consultations, and training which accompanied the launch of these regulations were of influence on workplace behaviours, beliefs, and policies, we may expect a change from the WERS investigations, undertaken two years previously.

Secondly, my aim in this research is to understand how and why senior managers respond to age in the workplace as they do. The elements I was addressing may be reflected in policy outcomes available in WERS 2004, but do not provide direct evidence on the underlying beliefs and behaviours of senior managers. Indeed, it was evident from the qualitative interviews that positive questionnaire results do not always indicate completely positive managerial perspectives – for example, it was not unusual for a senior manager scoring value alignment highly in the questionnaire then to speak about value non alignment in the interviews.

The third area of my reservations in the use of the WERS survey material relates to the manner in which the primary data was originally collated. Here, the unspoken assumption is that a wide and national quantitative survey provides useful and statistically generalisable information. Indeed, even discounting the marketing nature of reviews of Kersley, Alpin, Firth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge (2006), the range of superlatives from some eminent researchers flow easily. For example *Never has a book in employment studies had such a fine pedigree (Purcell); Gold standard survey of personnel and labor relations (Freeman) ; Provides the highest quality of information (Rubery)* Source Kersley, Alpin, Firth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge (2006), Flyer). But a reflective researcher must also consider the manner in which the primary research was obtained, not simply the original design and analysis of that research. My own experience as a senior manager suggested unwitting bias in sample collation. In my own former organisation, WERS surveys were conducted in several different workplace settings. I was to observe resistance, aggression and avoidance from those who had been identified as research respondents. Therefore, there was a tendency to redirect the WERS research to employees, and, in particular managers, who could be convinced to give time to participate in what they regarded as meaningless diversion from day to day business, and a desire to finish the process as quickly as possible. It is difficult to think that my own organisation was not the only one to respond to the research in this way. My conclusion is that WERS is still of value, and has particular value in being generalisable for the UK as a whole. However, this experience is a sanguine reminder to look at the implied underlying assumptions of using secondary research sources, and to cross reference, where possible, the evidence from that research.

3.9.7 Learning for Future Research

There were certainly times when it felt that the research process felt like

'muddling through' (Pettigrew, 1985 P222). However, it was important to have developed and maintained relationships with a research sample which was sufficiently patient to continue to contribute to the research programme over the three year life cycle of the research.

Whilst attracted to aspects of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, I do not have a preference for one research method, rather than the other. This view has not fundamentally changed following my background study on research methods for this thesis. I have noted, and been reassured, that whilst there is a broad consensus of views from the researcher community of the validity of research methods, there is not yet a consistent standard view on research design method and validity (Bryman, Becker, and Sempik, 2008). However, mixed methods research has helped to provide deeper insights into my researcher questions, as advocated by, for example, Dunning, Williams, Abonyi and Crooks (2007), and Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2003). Even so, mixed research does not yet appear to have a sufficiently consistent framework to justify Tashakkori and Teddlie's suggestion that it has become the 'third [research] methodology' (Px). The research has developed my skills as a critical researcher, in particular to develop a balanced and broad perspective from individual insights and to be constructively cautious and critical of the motivation and perspective of any source of data.

3.10 Conclusions

The research design for the study of older senior managers is based on mixed research methods. Through semi-structured interviews, supported by questionnaires, it has enabled deep insight into the social and personal worlds of respondents. Through quantitative research based on WERS 2004, and ETS 2006-2008, it broadens the research findings and includes statistically significant findings. The work commitment questionnaires, based on Meyer and Allen (1993)

offer the opportunity to study how the commitment of individual senior managers may vary with age, and to compare results with other research.

Taken together, the research design and sample base provide an opportunity to gain deeper insight into how older senior managers respond to age in the workplace, and the research findings which will now be reviewed in separate chapters on age and careers.

4. Research Findings: Ageism and Age Discrimination

Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the research of the twenty six senior managers on how they define and perceive age in the workplace. The research question on age was

> Question 1: How do senior managers understand age and age discrimination in the workplace?

The research sought to address the following themes within this overall question:

Age and individual perception
The extent to which senior managers perceived age in the workplace

The extent to which senior managers perceived the age of others in the workplace

The extent to which senior managers were the recipients of age discrimination in the workplace

Age and workplace practice
Examination of whether senior managers had been trained in discrimination and age discrimination

Evaluation of evidence that senior managers recognised, confronted, accepted, or promoted age discrimination

Evaluation of to what extent managers use business case or social justice arguments in support of age – related practices

The research data is drawn from the senior managers' semi structured interviews (Appendix C). Information about respondents' normal retirement age, and respondents' current chronological age was obtained from the pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix B). Additional information about whether respondents

had been formally briefed and trained in discrimination and age discrimination was obtained by questionnaire (Appendix E).

Age and individual perception

4.1 How Older Senior Managers' Perceive Age in the Workplace

During the semi structured interviews, respondents discussed their perceptions of age. Responses are analysed within the concepts of age literature frameworks, based on the summary adapted from Kooij, de Lange, and Dikkers (2008, P 370), and additional sources from the literature. (see Table 24 for Definitions of Age, below). This enabled the qualitative information to be examined within an analytical classification framework.

Age Definition/ Sub Categories Source: Adapted from Kooij, de Lange, and Dikkers (2008), P370	**Additional Perspectives**
Chronological Calendar Age	Threshold age (the age of onset of old age, generally accepted as aged 60-65) Stuart-Hamilton (1991)
Functional Cognitive Age Physical Decline	
Psychosocial Self Perception Social Perception	Gender and age (eg Double Jeopardy, de Beauvoir, 1972; women as 'never the right age' Duncan and Loretto, 2004; visual images of women Bytheway, 2005; domestic and care responsibility, Ginn and Arber, 1995)
Organisational Company Tenure Career Stage Skill obsolescence	Relative Age (chronological age in relation to others in the organisation), Cleveland and McFarlane Shore (1992); 'Older' as 15 years above individual's current age (Newton, Hurtsfield, Miller, Page, and Akroyd, 2005) 'Older as too experienced, or over qualified' (Shen and Kleiner, 2001)
Life Span Life Stage/ Family Status	Five lifecourse perspectives- interconnectedness, social and historical, transition points, agency plan and effort, ageing and human development (Bengtson, Elder, and Putney, 2005) Lifespan age (Claes and Heymans ,2008)

Table 24 Definitions of Age used in Research Data Analysis

Respondents had given their chronological age in the pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix B). The two questions on age asked during the semi structured interviews (Appendix C) were:

> Do you feel that you have suffered from, or benefited from, age discrimination in the workplace?
>
> Have you observed colleagues who have suffered/benefited from age discrimination?

In addition, several respondents specifically raised their current chronological age during the interviews, and since respondents knew that the research was about age discrimination, most interviewees offered further views beyond the direct questions. However, whenever age was mentioned during the interviews, it was always put into one of the further classifications shown in Table 24. For example:

> *I think I am a young 41 year old. I think 20 years ago I probably would have been in different kind of clothes, different hairstyle, and been older. But I think I am quite a young 41 year old.*

This statement may be deconstructed to show how it links with multiple social constructions of age, as shown in Table 25

Respondent Statement	Interpretation of age
I think I am a young	Psychosocial perception
41 year old	Chronological age
I think 20 years ago I probably would have been in different kind of clothes, different hairstyle, and been older	Life Stage
But I think I am quite a young 41 year old	Psychosocial perception

Table 25 Age Perception Analysis of Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41

Whilst all respondents discussed age with multiple social constructs, the ways of seeing and interpreting age differed between the 40-49, and the 50-59 age groups. Typical of the younger age group, and demonstrating a gradual realisation of ageing was the following statement

> *At 35 or so you kind of think well 50 is a long way away and now I've got to 44, 50 isn't that far away and I still feel like I can add some value*
> *Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44*

This statement may be analysed within its social constructions of age, as follows in Table 26:

Respondent Statement	Interpretation of age
At 35	Chronological age
well 50 is a long way away	Lifespan age and relative age
and now I've got to 44,	Chronological age,
50 isn't that far away	Lifespan age Threshold age Relative age
and I still feel like I can add some value	Organisational Age

Table 26 Age Perception Analysis of Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 44

So in one short sentence on age, this manager has given six different interpretations of age and its consequences. Furthermore, the reference to age 50 in this quotation is interesting, since the age is ten years younger than the normal retirement age in that manager's organisation, and fifteen years prior to state pensionable age. Here, however, it is mentioned as a threshold age for older age. Later in the 40-49 age band, respondents appeared to be more aware of their relative and organisational age, but finding a way to deny their relative age (*'I don't think it's necessarily that I'm one of the oldest'),* notwithstanding the comments of their colleagues (*People tease me that I am one of the oldest people around now!). Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 48).*

But the interviews showed that passing the threshold age of 50 may quickly lead to a sense of being too old for some in the organisation, as evidenced in a typical statement from a 50-59 year old, shown in Table 27 below, which also demonstrates that linked with a realisation of chronological age, is the belief that others would see this person as in late career stage, and with skill obsolescence.

Respondent Statement	Interpretation of age
People would probably think	Self perception Social perception
that if I were to abandon Headship	Skill obsolescence
at 55	Chronological age
I would just be looking for a softer number rather than a hands-on one	Organisational age (company Tenure) Career stage, Skill obsolescence

Table 27Age Response of Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55

Similarly respondents in the 50-59 age group assumed that older workers would be seen as low in motivation and impact, even though they would be below the default retirement age (EE(A) Regulation 30) of age 65. As one senior manager commented

> *When you get to 60* **(Chronological age)** *you think 'well why bother'?,You know you can just quietly retire* **(Career stage; Life Stage),** *and stay in the background Senior Manager, Manufacturing E Male Age 55*

These findings illustrate an important dimension to the discussions on age. UK legislation (EE(A)R, 2006) makes it unlawful to discriminate or to differentiate on the grounds of age. However, even in these short abstracts, respondents demonstrated multiple interpretations to age, each with projected expectations or actual experiences of age related differences. Indeed, one respondent demonstrated particularly clearly how self perception of age was closely related to perception of functional age, with the expectation that at a given chronological

age (mid fifties) functional age will mean that continuation in the role will no longer be appropriate, so that it becomes necessary to 'do something different'.

> *I think there will come a time when age will catch up with me* **(Functional age).** *As I said, I don't feel it yet.* **(Psychosocial age)** *Maybe when I reach mid fifties* **(Chronological age)** *I might feel quite differently. But I do think the demands of the job will not slow down,* **(Organisational age)** *you know, and if anything they will increase. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 48*

Here, the senior manager has used four constructions of older age, and presents a psychosocial perception of self that older age will mean that continued employment in role may no longer appropriate. This respondent believes that in his mid fifties he will no longer be as effective in role (self perception). The respondent did not say that he felt that others in their mid fifties may be beginning to feel tired, but this would be an expected social perception outcome from his self perception.

Overall, the semi structured interviews showed that respondents' perceptions of age were steeped in negative stereotypes about the deteriorating impacts of older age. Here, older age was perceived as fifty plus, so at least fifteen years younger than the UK national retirement age of 65. To understand how age may be regarded in an organisational context, senior managers' responses were then analysed from the perspective of how they observed the age of others in the workplace.

4.2 Senior Managers' Perception of the Age of Others in the Workplace

Having considered how individual senior managers perceived their own age, the second area to be examined was their perspectives of the age of others within the organisation. Here, perceptions of declining organisation value with

increasing age were readily available. In the following statement, the organisational value and career progression expectations of decline in an older person's contribution was evidenced, putting at risk that employee's value in the final fifteen years of employment (to the national default retirement age of 65), and with preference for a younger person *'who has more ahead of them'*. This also raises the question of whether an organisation makes an appointment on the basis of current value; of future potential; or whether the underlying reason is simply the preference for a younger person.

> *I have heard on frequent occasions people starting to identify an age, and it's an arbitrary age, beyond which people will not be considered for appointments on the basis that they are in the 'twighlight' of their careers and it is not based on capability to do the role but rather that 'he has got to 50 now and therefore he is on the downhill slope to retirement ...we need to appoint someone younger who's got longer ahead of them'. Senior Director Financial Services A, Male, Age 59*

In the same organisation, a Senior Human Resources Manager also noted the contrast in the acceptability between perceived benefit of low organisation tenure (as a proxy for younger age), but negative perception of longer organisational tenure(as a proxy for older age)

> *There's a feeling in the organisation that new is good, but long service is a bit tired – so an underlying current of ageism Senior HR Manager, Financial Services, A, Age 52*

Senior managers were also aware of the likelihood of negative perceptions of older workers from their organisation experience, networking experience, or experience working in other organisations. In each example below, the underlying attitudes suggest organisational behaviour contributing to horizontal or vertical occupational segregation on the grounds of age

At an employers' forum I attend, the HR Director of a retail chain for young women said of the need to recruit all ages, 'we don't want any old grannies working here' ... Senior HR Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 52

I saw it to some extent in [telecommunications company], where there was certainly 'age discrimination' – there's no doubt about that. If you were over 30 you were either in finance or in the wrong job! Senior Manager, Manufacturing E Male Age 55

I mean the [broadcasting] industry is a very young industry generally speaking. I am probably the oldest person in this building and I am 55.Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55

Younger senior managers (age 40-49) denied that age discrimination existed within their organisations, and were reluctant to acknowledge that ageism existed, but even if it did, it did not apply to them. Even so, they appeared suspicious of age distribution amongst their colleagues

So I'm just looking around when I'm at conferences and looking around at my existing team and there are not so many people of the older age group. It's fair to say that when I joined the South East and we had 11 or 12 Local Directors then, that perhaps the profile was completely different, the profile tended to be 40 plus...those people are no longer in the company. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Male, Age 42

However, this is not to say that older senior managers could not identify when they perceived that younger colleagues found tasks more stretching. For instance, a 55 year old Senior Manager noted the balance of effort and experience at different age ranges, as shown in the analysis in Table 28 below.

Respondent Statement	Interpretation of age
I have noticed from our consultants who I say are 25 – 30	Chronological age; Psychosocial age Social perception
they waste an awful lot of wasted energy and wasted effort. It's a combination of lack of experience, and 'to be seen to be doing something'.	Functional, Cognitive Age
And at my age,	Chronological age
I don't care what people think. Whereas when you are 25 you think 'oh my God'!	Psychosocial age (self perception or social perception),

Table 28 Age Response of Senior Manager, Manufacturing E Male Age 55

The evidence from the qualitative interviews clearly shows that attitudes to age in the workplace are not neutral, as should be the case for non-discriminatory age related people management practices. Instead, they are seen in terms of social construction, in particular for the role of the senior manager once the age of fifty is attained. This forms an important backcloth for the study of discrimination.

4.3 Senior Managers' Experience of Age Discrimination

Having considered how senior managers identified ageist behaviours and practices in the work place, the research considered the extent to which age discrimination had been identified. Here, the literature review gave potentially contradictory expectations on whether age discrimination would be uncovered in this research. First, it has been noted that age discrimination cases referred to Employment Tribunals totalled 5,200 in the year ended March 2010 (Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal Statistics, April 2006 to March 2010

(GB)), representing 6.2% of discrimination cases in the year ending March 2010 (See Table 12). In contrast, other studies have suggested widespread age discrimination in the workplace (for example, Walby, Armstrong and Humphreys, 2008, Framework for a Fairer Future, 2008). Similarly, other research (for example, Ward, 1984 Vincent, 1999, Corning 2002) pointed to the difficulties which researchers have encountered when asking respondents whether or not they have personally experienced discrimination. The nature of the qualitative research gave the opportunity to gain a more detailed insight into the apparent contradictions between the so co called 'widespread discrimination' and the slow growth in the numbers of cases presented to Employment Tribunals.

Evidence of workplace age discrimination was readily available from most respondents, based on their individual experience, or their observed experience from workplace practice, and is considered in respect of potentially unlawful age discrimination (direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, contrary to the EE(A)R (2006). Senior managers openly acknowledged the use of direct discrimination in selection decisions. In particular, one was candid about his reasons for preferring younger managers when making recruitment selections.

> *We are all guilty of it. I have been trying to get a new site manager...when the guys [shortlisted applicants] turned up they were all in their...probably about my age. I'd have to admit that I wanted someone younger. I cant explain but I suppose that you feel that the younger ones have more 'go' in them...not so fixed in their ways...you can train them more...the younger ones are easier to control Director, Manufacturing, H Male Age 54*

This action would be unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, under Section 3(1)(a) of the EE(A)R. It does, however, demonstrate one of the reasons why this senior manager would prefer to select a younger manager in preference to one aged in their fifties. In a second example of potential age discrimination, a

director who had planned to use the EE(A)R to continue to work to age 65, had it made very clear to him that he would be expected to retire at the organisation's pensionable age of 60, and expected not to continue to the retirement age of 65.

> *My immediate line manager spoke to me right back of the beginning of the year and said that what I should be looking to do was to get a successor in place early, and then perhaps try and limit my attendance to 2 days a week and wind down. Without any understanding of what motivates and drives me, and a natural assumption that you let go of the reign before retirement arrives without any thought that I might have certain personal goals that I want to achieve before I finish. Senior Director Financial Services A, Male, Age 59*

This action may be considered to constitute unfair dismissal on the grounds of age (EE(A) 2006, Regulation (3) and potentially unfair dismissal on the grounds of constructive dismissal. Despite the seniority of this manager, this was neither challenged through internal organisational procedures, nor through Employment Tribual, although the director did continue to work five days a week prior to retirement at age 60. In another case, a senior manager identified the potential justification (EE(A) 2006, Regulation 29(1)) for lawful discrimination, where the cost of training may not be justified in view of only medium term employment potential

> *I would say there possibly is 'some' discrimination because some managers would say 'well why would I want to take on a 60 year old, when I know he is only going to stay for 5 years'? But there is an element of that. Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing B, Female, Age 45*

However, since this interview response in September 2006, demonstrating the tension between legal compliance and the business case for training an older worker, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) appeared to uphold similar reasoning in Wolf v Stadt Frankfurt am Main (2010). Here, it was held that failure

to recruit a trainee fire fighter aged over 30 was lawful within Article 4(1) of the Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000/78, and required to undertake physically demanding duties for a long period, was justified on the grounds of recovering the long investment in training.

The research interviews did not reveal examples of indirect discrimination, nor harassment and victimisation on the grounds of age. However, more subtle forms of ageism, whilst not in obvious direct contravention of the EE(A)R were also evidenced, and suggested an underlying culture of ageism, and potentially institutional ageism, within the workplace. In the following example, a Fast Track Civil Servant's underlying capability had been doubted because of his age and career stage

> *Yes, I have seen evidence of age and other discrimination where private offices of ministers are filled by 'bright young things', moving through very quickly. Examples aren't easy, but in the fast stream of Civil Servants I was considered quite old at the time – 29 – and there wasn't quite the acceptance that my previous experience counted for anything. [People's attitudes were] did he take 5-6 tries to get in? Senior Manager, Male, Age 40, Public Services*

Senior managers were also aware of subtle forms of ageism either against themselves or observable in the wider workplace, as the following examples demonstrate. First, a senior manager interpreted performance management feedback from his Managing Director as ageist, six years before the organisation's pensionable age, and eleven years before the national default retirement age

> *I was told [by my Managing Director] that I was doing very well for someone of my age. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, 54*

In a further example, a Senior Manager recognised the unwritten rules contributing to age segregation in the media

> *Age discrimination occurs in creative industries a lot I think in a very subtle way...it's always possible at recruitment stage that someone has not been taken on because they are too old – but it's fairly obvious you know that anyone over the age of 30/3 who applies for a job with x [national radio station] they are not going to get the job. Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55*

In other cases, however, respondents were much more candid in their observations of how practices towards older workers were implemented by them personally, or in how they had observed others being managed. For example, in the arbitrary and subjective nature of determining whether to extend periods of service beyond normal retirement age

> *It's just what I've said about retirement – one rule for people you like and another for people you don't. Director, Female, Manufacturing, F, Age 46*

Or in rejecting what they perceive to be widespread organisational practices and stereotypical judgments about younger staff

> *It is [a] mindset that people have to put people into 'boxes' and treat them on a 'one size fits all' basis. Senior Director, Male, Financial Services A, Aged 59*

In summary, the research interviews demonstrated how younger (age 40-49) senior managers may have tentatively recognised age discrimination, but by the time they were in the 50-59 age band, this realisation had become more obvious, based both on the observation and experience as recipients of age discrimination. Against this background, the research looked for evidence of

whether and how senior managers confronted or condoned age discrimination in the workplace.

Confronting Age Discrimination in the Workplace

Having recognised examples of age discrimination within the workforce, senior manager interviewees were then asked for evidence that they had confronted age discrimination in the organisation, where they had encountered it. So, a senior HR manager (*Male, Age 52, Financial Services A*) having told executive search consultants to search for candidates of any age to fill senior management jobs in the organisation, was then told by the search consultants that his colleague line directors had already briefed the recruiters that candidates over the age of 40 would be '*considered too old*'. Indeed, from the twenty six managers interviewed, the only evidence that age discrimination was actively challenged came from three respondents, each from the not for profit sector, who could give examples of where age diversity practices or behaviours were in place and actively engaged, for example, confronting humour about their old age service users, described as '*old fogies*' and '*silvertops*', and in challenging the failure to recruit care assistant under the age of twenty because they were considered by some line managers to be '*too young (Head of HR, Age 48, Not-for-Profit*'), or where ageist behaviours were actively confronted in the workplace. In the same organisation, the Chief Executive reinforced that age was not an issue in employing staff at any level *'I have employed people in their fifties and sixties. Very senior levels. So age is not a barrier. It's about whether someone can do a job' (Chief Executive, Not-for-Profit, Male Age 55).* Even so, a senior manager who, in 2006 had been able to give positive age diverse examples in her own not for profit sector role, was herself subject to direct age discrimination when she was told in 2009 by her Chief Executive

We have chosen someone younger who we can better mould into what the organisation needs (To Senior Manager, Not for Profit Financial Services, Female 52)

None of the apparent age discrimination incidents reported in this research was pursued in an Employment Tribunal referral. Even had they been referred, it is not clear how many would have justified awards against the employer. Instead, the evidence presented here suggests a body of senior managers gradually coming to terms with workplace and ageism, and, despite their seniority, not yet always willing or in a position to confront it. For example, one senior manager (*Commercial Director, Manufacturing, Age 54*) commented that the only winners in age would be lawyers, whilst another acknowledged

We need to get honest about what people are capable of doing...but it's not just this embarrassing thing of well we'd better get rid of you because you're beginning to 'drop your memory' (Director, Female, Manufacturing, F, Age 46)

Overall, the semi structured interviews showed that senior managers were unlikely to confront age discrimination cases, except for one organisation (of the eleven organisations in the qualitative research cohort) in the not-for-profit sector. Having established that senior managers were reluctant to confront work place discrimination, the second line of enquiry was to consider to what extent they recognised whether there was a business case for age diversity in their organisations.

A Business Case for Age Diversity?

The literature review has already discussed the basis for age diversity, on the grounds of a business case, or social justice case, but noted that at national level, Bradley and Healy (2008) comment that 'governments may espouse an egalitarian stance, but only as long as it doesn't interfere too greatly with profits

or markets' (P71), and in organisations, Coupland Tempest and Barnatt (2008) argued that age discrimination was only likely to be addressed if it was seen by the business to be a 'worthwhile investment' (P429). Senior manager respondents were not directly asked their opinions on a business or social justice case for age diversity, but the expectation was that the focus on personal or third party experiences of possible age discrimination in the workplace would prompt discussion around this topic.

Despite the business case and social justice arguments for age diversity considered in the literature review, these perspectives of workplace ageism were noticeably thin from the senior management interviews, suggesting that the rationales for both age diversity approaches did not feature in their knowledge of such a case, nor in their thinking. During the interviews, only one respondent *(Not-for-profit)* raised the social justice arguments for age diversity in the workforce. Of the three from the twenty six senior managers who even acknowledged a business case for age diversity, each expressed doubt about whether a business case for age diversity even existed in their own organisation, that any motivation towards age diversity would be based on legal compliance, and noted the slow speed with which non ageist behaviours could be introduced into the workplace, both at the organisation and society levels. An area director *(Financial Services A, Male, 54)* recognised that part of the business case which saw the value of a diverse workforce, reflecting the diversity of the customer base, even though his organisation did not achieve this

> *You've got very few people in the senior years, and very few people in the younger years...and therefore the danger is that your [age] profile does not match that of your customers.*

Within the same organisation, two other senior managers recognised that a business case for diversity could exist, but that it would take a long time to be implemented in their current organisation.

Do we see age legislation as good for business? Some pressure groups argue that it is 'too good an opportunity to miss'. But my observation here and of other organisations is that few would subscribe to this, and look at it as a matter of compliance rather than opportunity Senior HR Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 52

I think it will be a long time, [to adopt age equality] because I think what you've got is an aspiration on the part of top management which still attaches in their minds to a retirement age of 60. Senior Director, Male, Financial Services A, Aged 59

The lack of discussion suggests that the so-called business case for age diversity is of low priority, or absent, in most senior management thinking, and contrasts starkly with the perceived need for workplace age diversity, as espoused by the UK government. These were the only managers who raised the business case for age diversity during the twenty six interviews; ironically, the three senior managers from *Financial Services A* were no longer employed by that organisation by the end of 2009. Only one senior manager (*Head of HR, Female, Not for Profit, Age 50)* raised age diversity as a matter of social justice.

In summary, age discrimination in the workplace was readily identified by senior managers, once they themselves had reached their mid forties in age; senior managers aged less than mid forties were less likely to identify age discrimination in the workforce, although a number recognised workforce age structures which could have been ageist. The social construction of age was more pervasive as an argument for continued ageism in the workplace, with legislative compliance of lower priority, and a business case for age diversity only considered by three managers. With substantial evidence of workplace age discrimination, the research also considered the effects of age and gender in women senior managers.

4.4 Training in Discrimination and Age Discrimination

Senior managers were asked in 2006 whether they had been trained in understanding discrimination. In September 2007, eleven months after the implementation of the EE(A)R 2006, they were asked again by questionnaire, whether they had received any briefing or training in understanding age diversity. No attempt was made to evaluate the content of training which they said they had received; instead, the outcome of the training was considered, based on senior managers' definitions of discrimination, and an assessment of their ability to identify forms of discrimination, based on the semi-structured interviews.

The results from the questionnaire on diversity and discrimination briefing and training are shown in Table 29 below.

	Senior Managers age* 40-49		**Senior Managers age* 50-59**	
Formally Briefed on Diversity?	Yes:13 No: 0	(100%) (0 %)	Yes: 12 No: 1	(92%) (8 %)
Formally Trained in Diversity?	Yes:13 No: 0	(100%) (0 %)	Yes: 12 No: 1	(92%) (8 %)
Formally Briefed on Age impacts of Diversity?	Yes:11 No: 2	(92%) (8%)	Yes: 12 No: 1	(92%) (8%)
Formally Trained in Age impacts of Diversity?	Yes: 6 No: 7	(46%) (54%)	Yes: 7 No: 6	(54%) (46 %)

Table 29 Senior Managers' Training in Diversity
Source: Author research 2007
*Age as at September 2007; N=26

All but one (a Commercial Director in the Manufacturing Sector) had been both briefed and trained in diversity management. Similarly, most (twenty three of the twenty six senior managers) had been briefed on the age impacts of diversity management. However, only half of the overall cohort had been specifically trained in age and ageism. The results demonstrated good levels of insight into discrimination in general, for example:

Discrimination is treating somebody unfairly based on – so not treating them the same as other people doing a similar job or function based on their sex, age , colour, race, religion, sexual orientation. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41

From my point of view it is being entirely fair and consistent with all members of staff. The definition would go well beyond any legal definition. It's more a values definition. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 48

In these two examples, the first respondent failed to mention disability; in the second example, the respondent suggested – arguably appropriately – that true diversity in the workplace needs to reflect wider values and culture, and not only legal requirements. However, this second description of non-discriminatory behaviour may not be as superior in defining age diversity as it first appears: it suggests discrimination should be *'beyond any legal definition'*, and instead prioritises a *'values definition'*: This begs the question of what interpretation of values is applied by the respondent. Further questioning of this senior manager revealed a low awareness of potential discrimination in his area, and concern from a senior manager reporting to him, laughed off at least for the time being, that he would be *'looking for younger people to do the job'. Ha ha ha (Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44).* Other managers also saw the potential for discrimination as going more widely than the employment law definitions, and addressing potential social exclusion as well, for example

When I worked at X, it was a very different work environment where you were expected to have blue blood. Business Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 46

I have also seen evidence of discrimination because of responsibilities outside work, for example childcare, and class and Oxbridge education, where the attitude is, 'you are not like me, you don't speak the same'. It's not common, but I have seen it. Senior Manager, Male, Age 40, Public Services

The Commercial Director, who, when interviewed said that he preferred younger managers to work for him as '*they were easier to control*', candidly replied that he had '*obviously not*' been trained in age diversity. A female director of her own company described herself as '*trained in age discrimination, but a bit rusty*'.

Two of the HRM Senior Managers interviewed had special responsibility for establishing age diversity policies and practices within their own organisations. However, whilst the senior manager responsible for HRM policy in a financial services organisation had been trained in age discrimination, a Head of Recruitment for a public sector organisation, also responsible for establishing non discriminatory resourcing polices, had not been trained in age discrimination himself.

So, all but one of the senior managers had been briefed in workplace diversity, and were often able to express this training in terms of a desired set of workplace values and culture, not simply legal requirements. However, only half of the twenty six respondents had been trained in age diversity. In spite of these managers' understanding of the principles of workplace discrimination, their ability or motivation to identify specific ageism in the workplace, demonstrated weak results, as has been evidenced throughout this chapter. Therefore, senior managers' perception of age and discrimination, and the impact of training which they have received, form the background for the final theme in this study, which is to consider evidence from the interviews of the extent to which they understood and confronted age discrimination in the workplace.

4.5 Evidence of Senior Manager Understanding and Confronting Age Discrimination in the Workplace

Understanding Discrimination and Age Discrimination

The previous section has shown that senior managers were able to give a variety of definitions of employment discrimination, ranging from generalised values statements to definitions which were close to legal definitions. A senior manager from the public sector observed that discrimination was rooted in *'prejudice and power', (Senior Manager, Public Service, Education, Female, Age 44).* Following this, a Head of HR, *(Female, Not-for-Profit, Age 49)* saw the need *'to treat people as equals. Mistreatment comes from a deep lack of respect for others'*, but that a *'dilemma is enjoying humour but not laughing at someone else's expense'*. Whilst this research was framed to consider issues with older workers, three respondents noted that age discrimination was also an issue for younger workers. *(Not-for-profit, Public Services, and Financial Services A)*

Overall, senior managers were able to explain discrimination, with varying degrees of depth and accuracy, reflecting communication briefing which all but one had received in discrimination, and half had received in age diversity. The next area for investigation in the research was the extent to which they were then able or willing to identify and confront workplace discrimination.

Managers aged under 50 were unlikely to have recognised workplace age discrimination, or appeared to have been unsure and confused as to whether age discrimination had been evidenced in their workplaces. Even amongst HR professionals, younger senior managers appeared confused and unsure of the evidence for age discrimination.

> *I don't think I do see evidence of age discrimination. Um, I don't suppose I see – well, not that I see a lot of people. I suppose you don't see anybody over 40 sailing through the banks. I don't know [why]. But you don't. I*

hadn't really pondered it...It's a very small percentage of people over 50. Yes...when people reach that age they tend to go. Senior HRM, Financial Services A, Female, Age 44

But most senior managers aged mid forties and beyond had seen and experienced age discrimination. Some managers identified that it could be role or function based, even within the same organisations – some role functions evidenced age discrimination, whilst others did not

I have seen some evidence of ageism according to the roles people have. In sales, anyone over 50 is considered too old, and 30 year olds seem to be preferred. But in professional appointments – law, finance, and so on, older appointments seem to be preferred. Senior HR Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 52

In addition to these individual examples, three respondents, a senior HR manager, area director, and senior manager were from the same unit in the same organisation. Their approaches and understanding of age diversity, whilst individually suggesting that age discrimination was not a major issue, combined to demonstrate systemic age discrimination in the work unit. First, the senior HR manager seemed unsure of whether or not age discrimination existed

Age isn't a huge issue. I don't see huge discrimination against age, I mean even in promotability... I have seen some of the older LDs [Local Directors] still you know – oh, that sounds awful doesn't it, I sound ageist myself. But they are achieving just as much as the very young ones and I mean I worry about the very young ones. Senior HR Manager, Female, Financial Services A, Age 40

This example suggests avoidance of seeing older managers as an issue, but a realisation that younger managers needed more support on appointment.

Speaking then to the area director, the most senior of the managers in that area, some evidence of ageism became more apparent

> *I can't say I have seen strong evidence of that [age discrimination] at all. I mean, you occasionally get the statements you know, when you look at individuals for a role and you think 'well they have only got 3 or 4 years to go' or you know, 'they are too young and they haven't got enough experience' but when you actually probe deeper into it and get people to consider it in a more rounded way, I can't say I have seen any massive evidence of it working against people. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 48*

Despite this assertion that age discrimination did not exist, thinking of employees as those who have *'only three or four years to go'* refers to the organisational pensionable age of 60, and was without regard to the national default retirement age of 65. Therefore, whilst the area director and senior HR manager may have claimed not to see significant evidence of ageism, expecting career limitations to managers in their fifties demonstrates that ageism exists on the part of this area director. This suggestion of ageism was reinforced when, one of his line reports, aged 44, said in a separate interview that he would be *'worried he'd be considered too old'* if there was a future restructure, so vulnerable to redundancy. The same senior manager had also been given the following advice from his area director about his career advancement

> *If I got to 48 that I probably wouldn't get to be an Area Director. Because I would be too old then and they would be looking for younger people to do the job. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44*

This linked evidence from one business unit does not demonstrate that *Financial Services A* was institutionally ageist. However, it does demonstrate how ageism may develop as part of the organisational culture, with an area director and HR

manager not recognising covert ageism, and a senior manager in his early forties specifically told that future promotion may be limited by age, and worried that he could become redundant if there was a restructure, but in neither case was willing to challenge these assumptions. Furthermore, amongst older managers, the threshold ages underlying the perception of 'older' in this business unit was late 40 and into age 50 plus, so potentially disenfranchising careers for those in their fifties and sixties. And age discrimination was not simply linked to selection and promotion, as the following examples on pay and severance decisions illustrate

> *There is little doubt from some of the conversations I have had with colleagues that age does feature in decisioning around [performance related] pay issues. Senior Director, Male, Financial Services A, Aged 59*

> *In severance decision too, they prefer to make younger people redundant, because it is cheaper to do so. Business Director, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 47*

There were further examples of expected reductions in future career moves, once senior managers were older, and especially as they entered the 50 plus age range.

> *If I sent my CV in to somebody...I mean I don't know the law that well, I don't know if you have to put your age on it or not, but I imagine if I did, I probably wouldn't even get an interview. Commercial Director, Manufacturing, H Male Age 54*

> *I know that I could do another job. If I sent my CV to someone, I don't think I would be successful. I don't know. Maybe I have misjudged that. (Chief Executive, Not for Profit, Male Age 55)*

These responses demonstrated the insecurity felt by these senior managers, if they had to apply for other roles, but the evidence of actual age based discrimination in selections failed to provide any consistency of results. For example, despite their reservations about finding alternative work, over the three years of the study, the commercial director was made redundant, and did successfully find alternative work as a technical director, and the chief executive was approached by executive head-hunters to move to a different role, but decided to decline the opportunity. However, the experience and expectations amongst senior managers aged from late forties and above was that finding an alternative role would be problematic. One senior manager (*Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55),* advised by a search consultant that they '*would not touch him with a bargepole'* because he was to be considered to be '*too experienced'*, was told when he asked '*do you mean too old?*' the answer was '*yes*'. A senior manager, *(Financial Services L, Female, Age 48),* still seeking an alternative role commented

> *Changing job at age 50+ might not be that easy really unless you happen to have the real skill sets that somebody is looking for...I think there are a lot of organisations where age might be a factor in their decision making and they would prefer to have somebody cheaper, younger ...and more innovative.*

When asked whether age would be a factor in the next appointment, one senior manager identified that the age profile of his peer colleagues was reducing, but did not initially appear to connect this to any form of age discrimination

> *The age profile for the Local Director role is reducing all the time. Yes, the only one older than me is CB. And the age range moves therefore from 28 through to C who is 47 I think or 48. With the majority of people in their early thirties. So there does seem to be a <u>significant</u> reduction in the age*

level. Why that should be? Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Male, Age 42

The same manager continued to identify what he considered to be the 'ideal' age profile for the role, and in doing so linked being able to work six days a week, and long hours with being of a younger age, since

'The [organisational] view is that a younger person might have more commitment to be able to drive the business than somebody that has more commitment and time stealers outside. I think ideally that this job is best suited to a person without the family commitment. You know, it is a high profile 60 / 70 hour week commitment including coming in and driving business on a Saturday as well... Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Male, Age 42 (and with two children)

Other age related stereotypes were evidenced in the research interviews from senior managers both in their forties and fifties, and focused on the presumption that older managers were unwilling or unable to work longer hours

It's [age discrimination] also as a result of the lifestyle. The hours are very long...in wouldn't suit a lot of people, particularly as they get older. Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55

Also in the public sector, an older manager, already working an eighty hour week, was challenged in a selection interview about his ability to work longer hours and work commitment

I was 15 years older than anybody else being interviewed...and I was asked about my energy and my ability to maintain my energy level in a hands – on situation Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55

Age based occupational segregation, whether based on the organisation or functional role within the organisation, was suggested by two respondents

> *The only thing that I have questioned is I really don't see anybody over the age of 50 here, but by the same token, I don't see anybody here in their early twenties or teenagers. It's very much the thirties and forties brigade. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41*

Or both organisation and job function segregation

> *[Ageism] depends on the area you are working in...I don't think areas like finance or legal would be seen as discriminatory as some of the [broadcast] output channels Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55*

Confronting age discrimination

As these findings demonstrate, there was evidence that senior managers interviewed had observed age based discrimination. However, no evidence was offered during their interviews that they had actually confronted age based discrimination, whether it affected them personally, or they had seen it in the wider organisation. As one Senior HR Manager said

> *I mean it's sad, I have seen it and I have challenged it [discrimination], but I haven't challenged it probably enough. Senior HR Manager, Female, Financial Services A, Age 40*

These findings both help to understand the low levels of Employment Tribunals referrals, as well as the widespread but tacit acceptance of age discrimination in the workplace. Where potential or actual cases of age discrimination had been

identified in the workplace the justification for how it was tackled was framed in business case terminology, and the needs of the business came first

> *It has always been in my mind that in terms of business plan deployment you have to make sure that whatever you are doing, whatever role you are doing you have to be aligned to the business goals of the business you are attached to and ultimately to the corporate goals. Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing, Female, Age 45*

However, talking about 'the business case' does not necessarily mean that a rational business argument had been developed for age diversity, rather than a business desire, irrespective of any underlying business rationale, for organisational ageism. One senior manager attributed slow adoption of age diversity as based on the expectations of top management, who themselves appeared oblivious to business, social justice, and national priorities for age diversity, because of *'an aspiration on the part of top management which still attaches in their minds to a retirement age of 60'. Senior Director, Male, Financial Services A, Aged 59*

In conclusion, and as for gender discrimination, there was low expectation that age discrimination in the workplace could be tackled quickly. Senior managers were frank about why this may be.

> *Age diversity is the last thing to be tackled. ... In its soul, the organisation doesn't believe that an old dog can learn new tricks. In selections, very often people work on selections on the basis of 'how old?' – anything over 35 means that you haven't got it in you. Business Director, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 47*

Therefore, respondents acknowledged that organisations may work to comply with the law, but without commitment to any over-arching business or social justice case

> *Do we see age legislation as good for business? Some pressure groups argue that it is 'too good an opportunity to miss'. But my observation here and of other organisations is that few would subscribe to this, and look at it as a matter of compliance rather than opportunity. The ageism in this organisation is a barometer for society as a whole. Senior HR Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 52*

> *Having a culture of compliance [with age discrimination law] ... not just for those individuals but that ended up reinforcing negative stereotypes and fuelling probably further discrimination and prejudice. Senior Manager, Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44*

Summary of Research Findings on Age

The senior managers' research has provided rich data about the understanding of age discrimination in the workplace, and also of the scope of discrimination. With the training they had received, senior managers were able to define age discrimination. Despite that training, and despite their roles as senior managers, recognition of workplace ageism was limited, and even where it was recognised, it was only addressed as a management issue in one organisation *(Not-for-profit)*. The research showed substantial evidence of social construction of age, and negative stereotypes of older age in terms of working hours endurance and commitment. That perception of ageism was layered into threshold ages of 40 – mid 40 (low perception), 45-50 (increasing perception), and 50 plus (high awareness, but tacit acceptance of ageism); the research did not consider senior managers aged over 60. So, in their middle to late forties, managers were much more likely to have recognised age discrimination; this recognition progressed to senior managers in their fifties although by this stage, they were likely to accept it

as an inevitable consequence of age. As one manager expressed it, *'A time where it is right for the* ***organisation*** *[author emphasis] you move on to give opportunities to others'. Senior Director Financial Services A, Male, Age 59.* But despite this stoic response from the older senior managers, their passive acceptance of career limitations in their fifties comes before the default retirement age of 65, an age which, at the time of writing (June, 2010), was being considered for increase or abolition (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009). In the meantime, organisations appear ill prepared for age diversity amongst their senior managers now, let alone the potential impact of higher working ages if the default retirement age is increased or abolished.

The research was designed to consider individual managers' perspectives of ageism, and it had not been intended to investigate the possibility of whether an organisation could be considered to be institutionally ageist. Even so, the linked research of three managers within one operating unit has shown how this may occur, with low awareness from those senior managers of the concept of ageism, nor of age measures within the area, whilst the third manager had been specifically told that his promotion opportunities would become limited by the time he was 48, and at the age of 42, he was already nervous (with or without reason) that a restructure would leave him being seen as too old.

The implications of these findings will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Before that, the thesis will now consider senior managers' career perspectives and how age affects career plans and outcomes.

5. Research Findings: Career

Introduction

Having considered senior managers' perceptions of age in the workplace, the second area of attention was to examine how they perceived career as they became older. The research question (Question 2) on age for this study was

> What influence does age have on senior managers' own career plans and outcomes?

Within this overall question, the research themes on career are:

> Career and the Psychological Contract
> This section presents the research findings on managers' responses to changes in the psychological contract
>
> Performance Management in Older Managers
> In the research interviews, managers discussed the potential benefits of performance management, though few experienced positive feedback in practice
>
> Commitment, Values, Loyalty and Pride
> The literature review considered the role of commitment and values in organisational working life and this section will consider findings on how commitment values and organisational pride affect older senior managers' career intentions
>
> Career Challenges: Resilience, Plateau and Burnout
> During their careers, senior managers have responded to situations requiring resilience and these will be considered in the context of

managers' challenge and development, career experiences of plateau and career burnout

Ending of Career
This section will explore the research findings on managers' intentions and experience of ending of career, and how this relates to career theory.

Three Year Perspective
Following the initial research in 2006, contact was maintained with the twenty six senior managers for a period of three years; this section summarises individual managers' career outcomes over that period

The literature review which formed the backcloth for this research is set out in Chapter 2, Part 3, and the semi structured interviews were based on the questions as shown in Appendix C. The research findings in this chapter are supported by quantitative analysis from the WERS 2004 questionnaire (Appendix H); the Values, Loyalty, and Pride Questionnaire (Appendix H); and the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Appendix D).

5.1 Career and the Psychological Contract

As an introduction to the findings on career, WERS 2004 was used to analyse how older senior managers' satisfaction compared with that for other employees. For this purpose, WERS 2004 Question A8 series was used. This compared the results of senior managers' satisfaction from a sense of achievement from work; scope for using initiative; influence over work; satisfaction with training received; satisfaction with pay; satisfaction with job security; and satisfaction with the work itself. The analysis (see Appendix Q) shows that senior managers consistently have higher scores than non managers. At senior management levels, these results show broad consistency across age ranges, with slightly higher scores for senior managers in the 31-49 years of age in four of the seven areas (sense of achievement (Table 37a), scope to use initiative'(Table 37b), and 'influence over

own work' (Table 37c), satisfaction with the work itself (Table 37g). The remaining three values (satisfaction with training (Table 37d), satisfaction with pay (Table 37e), satisfaction with job security (Table 37f) were higher in the 51-60 age bands. These results clearly demonstrate that senior managers, including those in the older age ranges, continue to be committed to their organisations, and that overall work satisfaction indicators for older managers are comparable with, or exceed, those of their younger colleagues.

However, the qualitative research findings also considered evidence for changes in the psychological contract. The literature review considered Rousseau (1995) and Rousseau and Greller's (1994) definition of the psychological contract in terms of employees' beliefs of what is expected of them, and what in return they may expect from the employer. It was seen as an exchange agreement between the individual and the organisation. Whilst the concept of the psychological contract has been criticised (for example Guest 1998, 2004, Boxall and Purcell, 2003, and Cullinane and Dundon 2006) the framework of the psychological contract was considered to be valid for investigation in this research, since it gave the opportunity to consider managers' perceptions of changes which had affected their workplace experiences over time.

Senior managers in the cohort recognised that society, organisation, and one to one relationships within the workplace had changed over the course of their career lives, but none saw the changes as positive. One senior manager (*Manufacturing E Male Age 55)* spoke of joining a chemical company in his twenties, thinking that he would be '*looked after for the rest of his life'*, but that,

> *'You realise they are <u>not</u>. Then you quickly come to terms with you have to look after your own career, because nobody else will'.*

A second respondent reflected on a society, *' less about loyalty and emotional attachment and much more about you know 'go for the highest salary today' kind of thing'. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 48*

New entrants to the organisation in the managerial hierarchy were found to influence the leadership culture, and also wider working relationships in the organisation. So, new entrants could bring with them *'new culture, which has been quite challenging, but nevertheless perceived as positive'. (Senior Manager, Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44).* For other respondents, a feeling that changes in resourcing policies in which mid career managers were recruited into the organisation had the effect of challenging and potentially under valuing other managers who had spent most of their careers in that organisation. Of the new entrants, one respondent observed how they tended to reject existing organisational norms

> *We've constantly got changes at leadership level, they come in with their new broom, they've all got new ideas so all the old ideas are bad and – they're not. I think that's my frustration with the organisation. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44*

An Area Director's experience was of the *'lack of emotional attachment'* from new entrants to the organisation (*Financial Service A, Male, Age 48*), whilst yet another saw new entrants as lacking both commitment to the organisation, and contributing to under valuing those who had worked there for a long time

> *They [new entrant senior management] don't have any commitment largely to the organisation. In many instances they are out to make their mark, build their CV and move on...we are trying to treat people who have worked for the organisation for 25 / 30 years in a similar vein without recognising the loyalty they have given to the organisation. Director Financial Services A, Male, Age 59*

The combination of seeing new entrants replacing colleagues caused some managers, who had been in the same organisation most of their lives, to reframe their careers perspectives, and to see their relationships with their employer, as now brittle and potentially short term. An Area Director, *(Financial Services A, Male, 48)* with thirty years service observed how even recent changes in the psychological contract were observable. The effects of these changes in the psychological contract were both emotional and served to focus senior managers on shorter term time horizons.

> *The company is much more ruthless than it was before... It wouldn't be a surprise to me if at any time if they said to me 'okay, that's it – time up. Enough is enough we want to bring in someone else!' ...over the last 12 / 18 months I have seen what I have regarded as 'good people' going without too much notice. It does seem to be quite intolerant of a poor quarter shall we say, or people can just end up at the wrong place at the wrong time. In a way, perhaps that would not have happened 3 or 4 years ago. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 48*

In the end, organisations' rhetoric about new work and life balances were seen to be hollow, since '*I think the organisation professes a lot about work/life balances but I don't think it ultimately delivers it'. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44.* Senior managers spoke about the deep emotional pain which the change in psychological contract had caused them. A Headteacher, who was to lose his job within two years of the first interview said that he had put his '*life and soul into this job' Headteacher, Male, Age 54 Public Services C.* Another senior manager, also from the public sector, showed similarly high emotional commitment to the organisation, only to be distraught at the change in management style and priorities

I was told not to take it personally, because it was political, ideological you know, money saving. No reflection on the work we had done. I take it personally because you know; you have seen all your energies, all your efforts, all the late nights, all the long drives back from Leeds on the M1... I cannot believe that an organisation I have revered all my life could suddenly behave like this and treat people like this. Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55.

In summary, senior managers in the research cohort demonstrated strong awareness of changes in their working relationships with their employing organisations. From the research cohort of twenty six managers, twenty managers, representing six different organisations, commented on perceived decline in psychological contract; furthermore, decline was observable by organisational type, with changes in the public and private sectors most evidenced, but not by the age band of the manager. Senior managers with long service in the same organisation commented particularly on these changes. The causes of changes in psychological contract included: mid – career managers entering the organisation at top management level, and being perceived as lacking the organisational commitment of long serving managers; the new entrants under- valuing long serving managers and organisational cultures; and an increased tendency for senior managers to lose their jobs after even short periods of adverse business results. The effects of these changes were increased anxiety amongst senior managers, and a feeling of alienation from the organisation which they thought they knew intimately. However, it was difficult to separate whether it was managers' maintenance or decline in career stage which precipitated these feelings, or decline in psychological contract which then precipitated career decline. It is also possible that managers who had commented on adverse changes in their psychological contract were perceived as under-performing in the workplace, resulting in negative perceptions towards the organisation. However, only one senior manager (*Headteacher, Male, Age 54 Public Services C).* volunteered that this was the case.

5.2 Performance Management in Older Senior Managers

The literature review has demonstrated the important role of performance management and feedback. Positive feedback has a motivational impact on the individual (Bandura, 1989, and Locke and Latham 2002), and an important role identifying learning needs, aligning goals to those of the organisation, and in reward. In addition, the literature showed how performance management was important with a variety of self efficacy measures. Individuals' contentedness is crucial to further goal commitment (Bandura 1989; and Locke and Latham 1989). Some deterioration in goal achievement may be recognised in older workers (Berry and West, 1993). Positive goal feedback helped with a range of performance indicators, such as higher self-efficacy and actual performance, whilst negative feedback reduced self efficacy and overall work performance (Bandura and Jourden,1991). West, Bagwell, and Dark-Freudman (2005) consider older workers as likely to respond positively both to goal setting and positive feedback as for younger workers, and that goal progress was important for older adults. McNair and Flynn (2005) observed that employers to be more lenient in the performance management of older workers but perceive older workers as declining in performance (Flynn, 2010, P7).

This research considered how older senior managers felt their performance and contribution were recognised. During the research interviews, managers clearly demonstrated how they sought feedback on their work performance, despite their seniority, as an Area Director, *(Financial Services A, Male, 54)* aptly observed

> *The more senior you get in an organisation, sometimes people foolishly believe that you need less recognition [and] that recognition is actually for the front line or more junior people.*

The positive impact of performance feedback was noted by three managers, first when new managers revitalised their sense of interest and being valued

> *My new manager has been able to see my individual needs – helped me to develop and feel more stretched, feel welcome, and has been very positive and constructive by saying, 'how can we make things better for you?' Senior HR Manager, Financial Services, A, Age 52.*

> *Yes, it's nice when your boss or even somebody else says that was a nice piece of work, or that meeting went well, thank you, etc., etc., and that's the sort of thing that I found within UKA is sort of to some extent, 'old fashioned' which again is an out of use term. Senior Manager, Manufacturing E Male Age 55.*

And in the third example, the wider positive feedback from stakeholders

> *There is that sense of achievement I think with feedback that you get from the customer who, being the individual, the feedback you get back from the trade unions, who are incredibly supportive of it. And equally, the business who are very supportive. So there is that feeling of achievement that you have made a difference. Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing, Female, Age 45.*

Senior managers, who themselves undertook performance reviews of their managerial teams, were pragmatic and realistic about what could be expected from the review process. One recognised that his boss '*did a pretty good job at it, given that she hardly ever sees me and works 100 miles away from me', (Senior Manager, Male, Age 55 Media/Public Sector)* whilst a second acknowledged

> *By and large, given the span and controls that that individual has, I think he does a good job at keeping me involved in the team and understanding my motivations and trying to support them. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Male, Age 42.*

But these positive experiences of performance review tended to be in the minority, since the more common view, expressed by twenty of the twenty six managers, was that positive feedback was rare, and reviews were perceived as likely to focus on performance gaps rather than to acknowledge success as an Area Director, *(Financial Services A, Male, 48)* noted

> *At a senior level within the organisation if you are someone who needs to be told you are doing a good job at the end of each week, it's just not going to happen. Your boss is always going to be about 'what work will we get the next 10% - where's the next bit of uplift coming from'?*

And in many cases, recognition of good performance seemed to be absent altogether

> *It was all over with TV coverage, press cuttings, press cuttings, and it was seen as one of the success stories....and principally driven it on my own. I felt really proud of that. Now the bit that is missing for me is that nobody has actually written to me...which used to happen in the past, and said 'bloomin' great'. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44.*

In the public sector too, positive recognition and feedback seemed to be lacking, *You can feel very isolated and pressurised in this job sometimes. Male, Age 54 Public Services C.*

Despite organisational policies requiring managers' performance to be reviewed at least annually, this did not apply in every case. One Senior Manager, *(Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55)* had not been appraised for three years, and *'I would go for 6 months without my line manager saying hello'.* Similarly, a Senior HRM, *(Financial Services A, Female, Age 44)* had a manager who had not spoken to her for four months, and in two years had *'three [separate]*

managers, none of whom has taken any interest in me whatsoever and I just find it soul destroying'. But failure to give feedback, even at senior manager level, is not only important for ensuring that personal goals are aligned with organisation goals, but a few words of support may also save unnecessary staff turnover of this expensive resource

> *I didn't think I was doing a good job, but when I came to leave the MD said to me kind of what a good job I had done, and I suppose throughout my career, I am ever satisfied with my performance in a way, so unless somebody actually tells you that you are doing well, you never know Director, Manufacturing, H Male Age 54.*

Amongst the other senior managers who said they had had little performance review or feedback in their roles, some spoke of *'recognition of my contribution has been conspicuous by its absence' (Senior Director Financial Services A, Male, Age 59); 'being taken for granted' (Senior Manager, Financial Services L, Female, Age 48); 'Recognition is implied rather than expressed' Male, Age 54 Public Services C;* no performance review so, *'just as well I sort of have a good work ethic' (Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55),* and *' How is my personal contribution recognised? I get paid. I rarely get a thank you' (Director, Female, Manufacturing, F, Age 46),* and *'a fairly tough organisation to work for if you were someone that 'craved' recognition'. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, 48.* Whilst all senior managers felt fairly rewarded, the desire for feedback was summarised by a Senior Manager (*Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44)* as follows

> *I actually need somebody to tell me. I like that, that gives me a buzz and it just keeps me motivated. I still do it, but I do it with a happier heart if somebody says 'well done'.*

Overall, therefore, attention given to performance management and acknowledging and valuing good work was at best fragmented, and usually absent for the group of senior managers. In its absence, organisations missed opportunities to enhance individual self-efficacy. However, where it was provided, managers clearly appreciated the value of feedback and recognition for work well done.

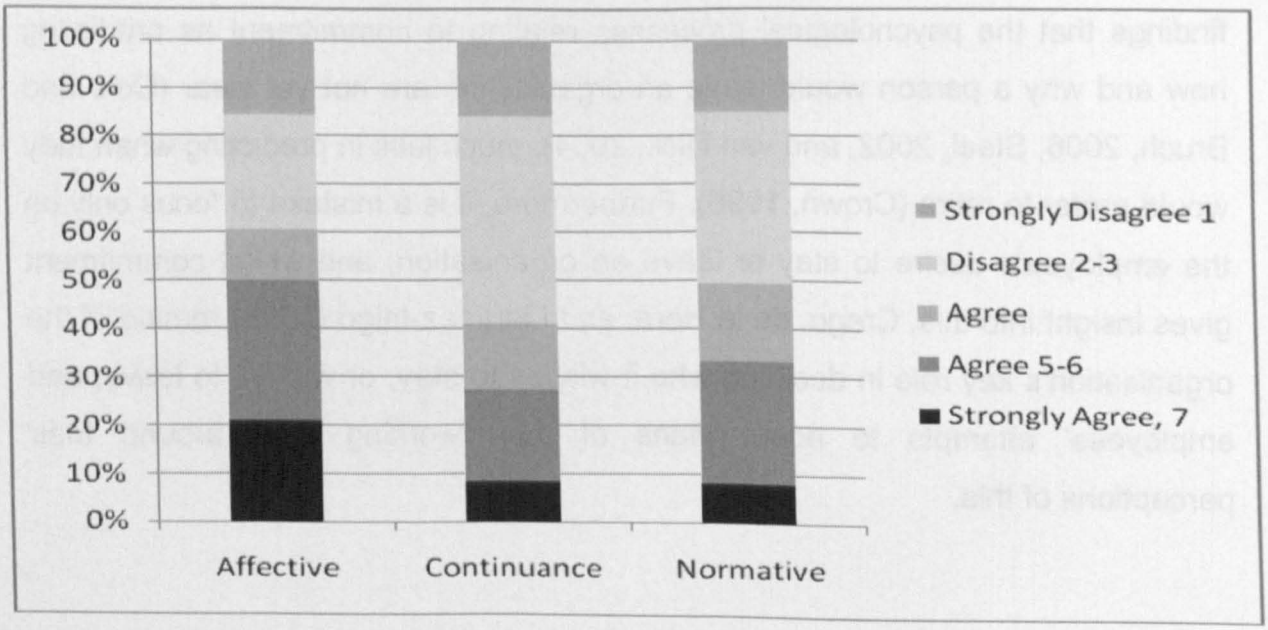
5.3 Commitment, Values, Loyalty and Pride

The next area of enquiry was to consider senior managers' commitment, values, and organisational loyalty and pride in the organisation. This was considered through questionnaire, and supported by discussion during the semi structured interviews.

Commitment – Quantitative Results

Senior managers completed the Meyer and Allen (1993) Commitment (Appendix D) Questionnaire. The results in Table 30 show that the senior managers in the sample cohort have high affective (58%) and moderate normative (43%) commitment, but lower continuance commitment (39%). High affective commitment has been linked with low intention to leave the organisation (for example, Allen and Meyer, 1996, Mathieu and Zajac, 1990, and Tett and Meyer, 1993). However, the qualitative data from this research contradicts that research, and high affective commitment managers both said that if they had the chance to leave, then they would, or they planned to retire early (see section 5.5). Similarly, older workers are expected to have higher continuance commitment (for example, Snape and Redman, 2003), leading to the expectation that they would be financially dependent on remaining in the organisation. However, within this research cohort, continuance commitment was low, and whilst five managers saw the need to continue to work, this was not linked to a perceived need to remain with their current employers, even for those with long service with the same employer. The qualitative nature of this research reinforces more recent

findings that the psychological processes relating to commitment as predicting how and why a person would leave an organisation are not yet clear (Cole and Bruch, 2006, Steel, 2002, and van Dick, 2004), much less in predicting when they would prefer to retire (Crown, 1996). Furthermore, it is a mistake to focus only on the employee's desire to stay or leave an organisation, and whilst commitment gives insight into this, Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008) remind of the organisation's key role in deciding who it wishes to stay, or wishes to leave, and employees' attempts to adapt plans of their working lives around their perceptions of this.



	Strongly Agree	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Affective Commitment	20.0%	28.0%	10.0%	23.0%	15.0%
Continuance Commitment	8.0%	18.0%	13.0%	41.0%	15.0%
Normative Commitment	7.0%	22.0%	14.0%	31.0%	13.0%

Table 30a Results of Meyer Allen Work Commitment Questionnaire Average Commitment Scores
N=26 ; Author research

These overall results may be further analysed for the senior manager research cohort by breaking them down into their component questions, as shown in tables 30b, 30 c, and 30d below. These more detailed results show that affective commitment of the cohort senior managers is particularly strong, with 66% of senior managers saying that they would be happy to spend the rest of their careers in the organisation (Table 30 b, Q1 AC 1) ; 81% who enjoy discussing their organisations with people outside it (Q2 AC2, Table 30 b) ; and 73% saying that the organisation had a great deal of meaning for them (Q7 AC7, Table 30 b). In Table 30c, continuance commitment is seen to be generally lower than may have been expected, but Q12 CC4R shows that 66% feel that it would be costly to leave the organisation. In Table 30 d, senior managers from the research

cohort (N=26) showed that they would not feel guilty to leave the organisation now (Q20 NC3), but a surprising 73% disagree that the organisation *deserves* their loyalty. In contrast, it will be seen later that 91% in 2006 and 86% in 2009 (Table 32) nevertheless, felt loyal to the organisation.

Affective Commitment Question	Question (From Meyer and Allen, 1993, Appendix D)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1 AC 1	I would be happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation	46%	20%	10%	16%	8%
Q2 AC 2	I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it	35%	46%	8%	12%	0%
Q3 AC 3	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own	4%	50%	12%	31%	4%
Q4 AC 4 R	I think I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one (Reverse)	4%	50%	12%	31%	4%
Q5 AC 5 R	I do not feel like 'part of the family' in this organisation (Reverse)	4%	12%	15%	10%	38%
Q6 AC 6	I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation	19%	8%	8%	54%	12%
Q7 AC 7	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me	50%	23%	12%	15%	0%
Q8 AC 8 R	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organisation (Reverse)	0%	19%	8%	19%	54%

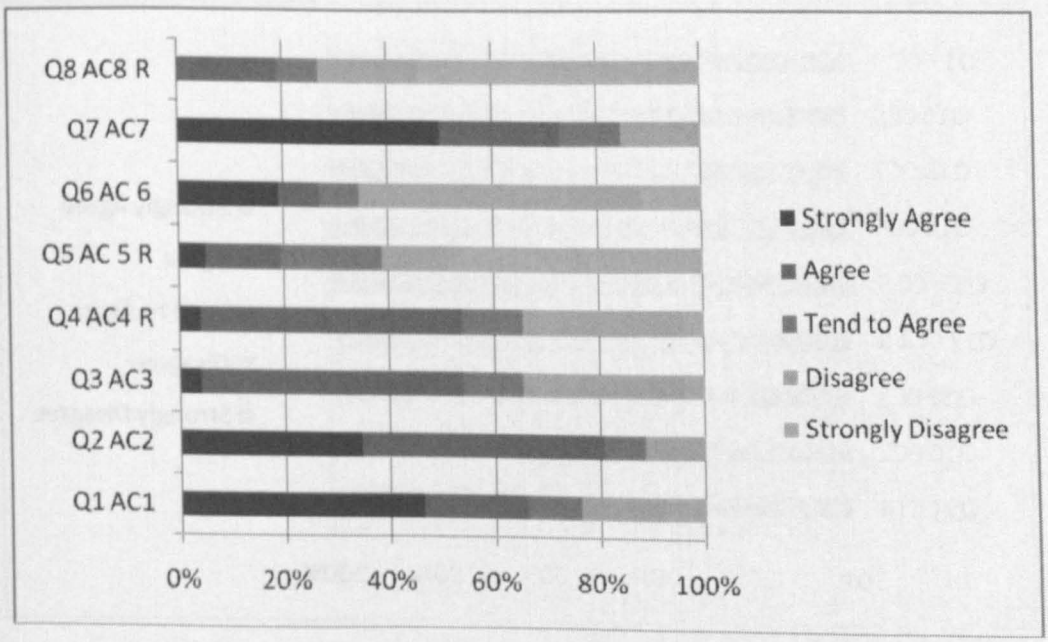


Table 30 b to Show Affective Commitment Results for Senior Manager Cohort, 2006.
Source, Author Research N = 26

Continuance Commitment Question	Question (From Meyer and Allen, 1993, Appendix D)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q9 CC1R	I am not afraid of what might happen to me if I quit my job now without having another job lined up (Reverse)	8%	31%	35%	19%	8%
Q10 CC2	It would be very hard for me to leave my job right now, even if I wanted to	8%	19%	23%	46%	8%
Q11 CC3	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation right now	12%	19%	8%	54%	8%
Q12 CC4 R	It wouldn't be costly to leave my organisation in the near future (Reverse)	4%	15%	15%	35%	31%
Q13 CC 5	Right now, staying with my organisation is as much a matter of necessity as of desire	8%	19%	15%	42%	15%
Q14 CC6	I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation	8%	19%	4%	42%	27%
Q15 CC7	One of the few negative consequences about leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives	8%	23%	4%	19%	46%
Q16 CC8	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organisation might not match the benefits I have here	15%	12%	19%	50%	42%
Q17 CC 9	If I had not put so much into this organisation, I might consider working elsewhere	4%	19%	12%	42%	23%

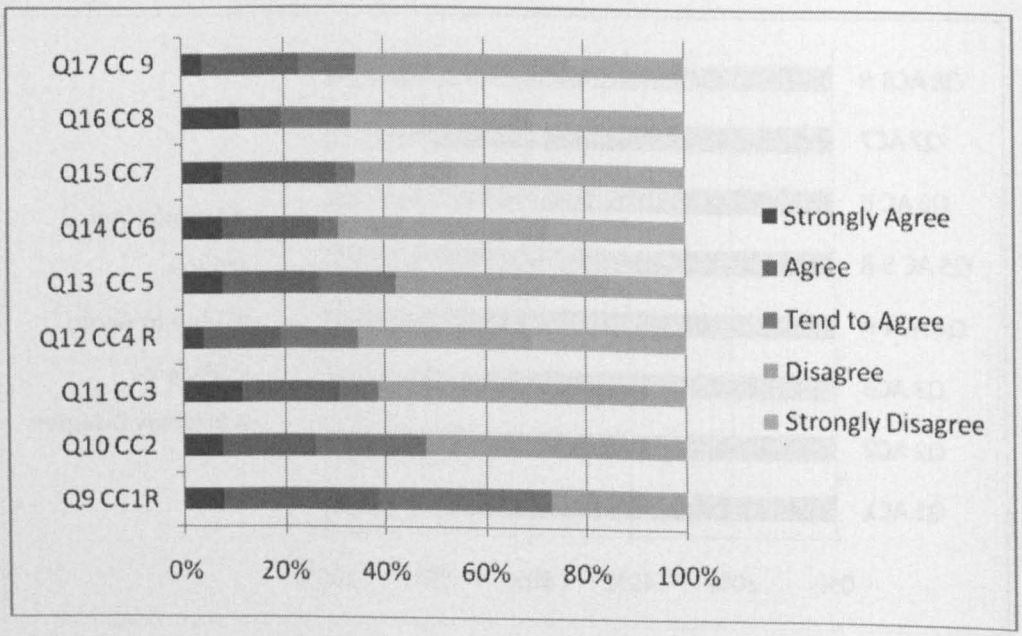


Table 30 c to Show Continuance Commitment Results for Senior Manager Cohort, 2006
Source, Author Research N = 26

Normative Commitment Question	Question (From Meyer and Allen, 1993, Appendix D)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q18 NC1 R	I do not feel any obligation to stay with my current employer (Reverse)	4%	19%	12%	42%	23%
Q19 NC2	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave my organisation right now	15%	31%	8%	38%	8%
Q20 NC3	I would feel guilty to leave my organisation right now	4%	12%	35%	35%	15%
Q21 NC4	This organisation deserves my loyalty	4%	15%	8%	46%	27%
Q22 NC5	I would not leave this organisation now , because of my sense of obligation to the people in it	12%	35%	35%	15%	4%
Q23 NC6	I owe a great deal to the people in this organisation	12%	46%	8%	27%	8%

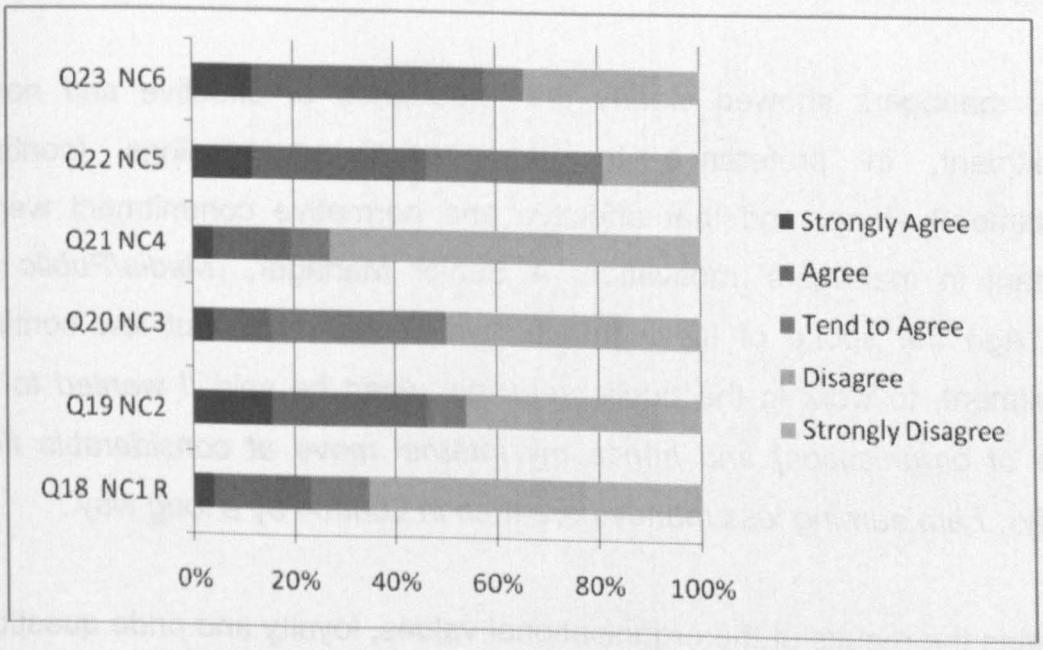


Table 30 d to Show Normative Commitment Results for Senior Manager Cohort, 2006
Source, Author Research N = 26

Findings on Commitment from Semi Structured Interviews

In addition to the statistical analysis from the Meyer and Allen Work Questionnaire (Appendix D), senior manager respondents gave evidence of examples of how they had demonstrated commitment in practice. One Senior

Manager, *(Financial Services A, Female, Age 48)* spoke of working continuously since her Mother's funeral on the previous Monday, a situation which she described as *'Quite strange, quite sad really'*. However, at a more systemic level, it also became clear that organisational change and merger impacted on organisational commitment, in particular affective and normative commitment. This also induced culture shock as both a new generation of top managers, and (in this case) a different management culture came to the organisation:

> *Your network, you know, people like TJ and others, you think – 'God, they are all gone'. And it's all a whole new 'fresh blood' of Americans basically! And it does make it feel quite different. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, 48*

Senior managers showed clearly the importance of affective and normative commitment, in preference to dependence on earnings (continuance commitment) alone, and that affective and normative commitment were very important in managers' motivation. A Senior Manager, *(Media/Public Sector, Male, Age 55)* spoke of his high affective commitment, but low continuance commitment, to work in the public services, when he said *'I wanted to stay in [name of organisation] and hence my internal move at considerable financial penalty...I am earning less money here than in London by a long way'.*

Reflecting the results of the organisational values, loyalty and pride questionnaire (see Tables 31a, 31b, and 31c below), most senior managers were very clear about their loyalty to the organisation, and *'a very strong allegiance to [name of organisation]. And it's an allegiance you can't really measure. Senior HR Manager, Female, Financial Services A, Age 40.* But that loyalty also extended to expressed affection (and normative commitment) for colleagues

> *I've got people in the organisation that I am very fond of...the closest working partners I have had. I enjoy their success and really enjoy them succeeding.*

That sounds contrived, but it's not. Chief Executive, Not for Profit, Male Age 55

Despite this strength of loyalty, managers were not blind to the prospects, and sometimes the desirability, of leaving their current employers. A Business Director *(Male, Financial Services, A, Age 47)* considered himself to be committed to the organisation, but *'If, out of the blue, I had the chance to go, I think I would go. Things [values] have to be on my terms'.* Similarly, a Director, Manufacturing, *(H Male Age 54)* felt that he was *'A very loyal person so whatever they tell me to do, I will do. But to some extent if I had half a chance of getting out, I kind of would'.*

Continuance commitment (economic reasons for remaining working) was only mentioned by five of the twenty six senior managers in the interviews. The first manager spoke of the need to earn a salary *' I predominantly work to preserve myself' (Director, Female, Manufacturing, Age 46).* But continuance commitment was not only based on the need to earn a salary for the individual. Three managers spoke of the need for continuance commitment to care for dependants: one manager *Senior HRM, Financial Services A*, despite having MS herself, anticipated the need to care financially for her parents when they were older. And the fifth managerial respondent needed to continue to earn a salary because he had failed to develop a pension plan earlier in his career

My problem is that I screwed up my pension really...I've only got 10 years or so now. So there is a constant debate in my mind between 10 years of job satisfaction between now and 55 or just work until I am 65 and maybe keeling over a year later Director, Manufacturing, H Male Age 54

The research also considered how senior managers' values, loyalty and organisational pride in their organisation, how those results varied with age; and how the results contrasted with older employees in non managerial roles.

Values, Loyalty and Organisational Pride

Quantitative data for this research was based on the WERS (2004) questionnaire (Appendix H), and the results shown in Tables 31a-c below. Use of the WERS 2004 further gave the opportunity to compare and contrast the results of the older senior managers' research cohort with the wider population of UK managers, and also to analyse those results by age.

The data from WERS 2004 show that from the 416 respondents identified as senior managers, values are more closely aligned to those of the organisation than those of non senior management employees. Table 31 (a) shows that 76.9% of senior management employees aged 31-40; 82.1% of those aged 41-50; and 82.1% of those aged 51-60 are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' agree that they 'share many of the values of their organisation'. In contrast, the corresponding values for non senior managers are 53.9%, 56.8%, and 59.4%. Furthermore, 90% of senior managers aged over 60 feel aligned with most of their organisation's values. These findings show that there is a significant difference between the value acceptance between senior managers and non senior managers, but that value acceptance of senior managers does not vary significantly between ages 31 and 59.

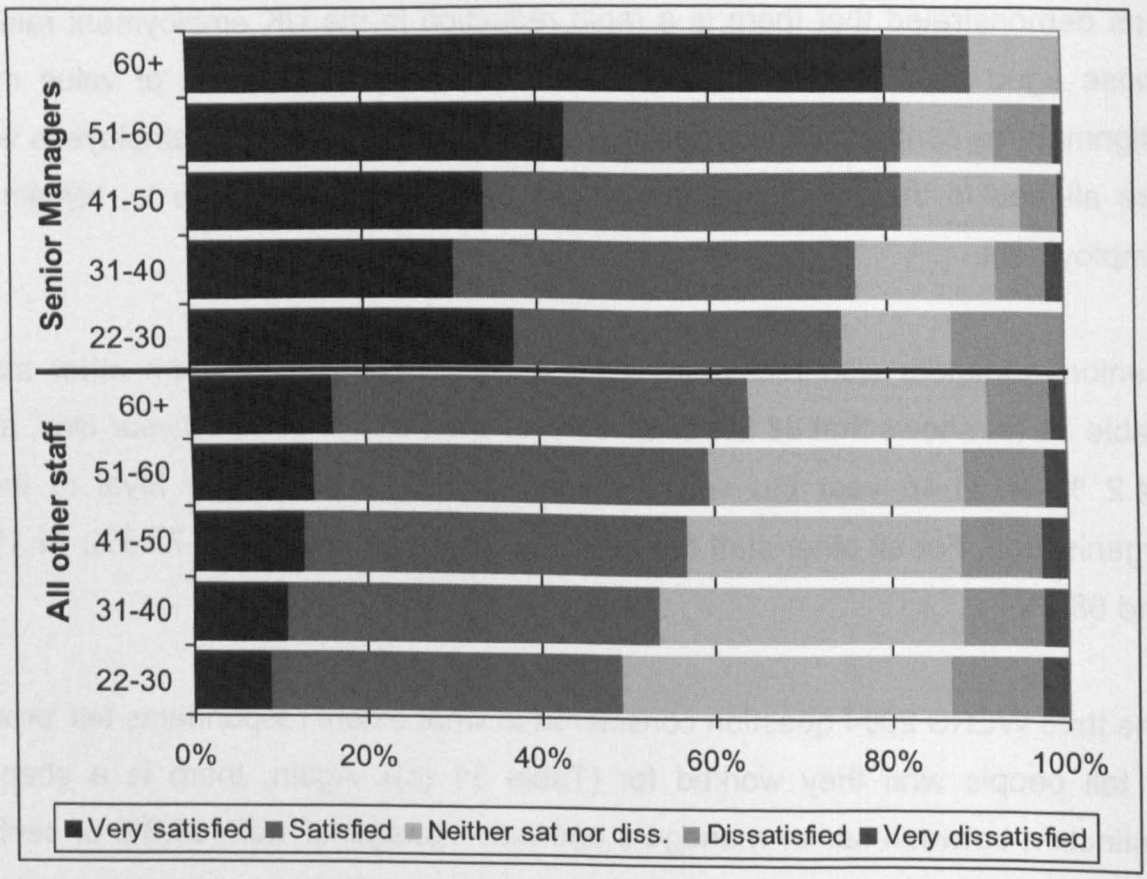
Within the WERS 2004 survey, the 90% of senior managers aged over 60 agreeing or strongly agreeing with organisation values of senior managers represented only 9 respondents (1.9% of senior managers) and is not statistically significant. Even so, it does raise the question of the strength of response from this age group, and reflects a higher value alignment of 64% shown in non senior management employees. This may lead us to conclude that older (over age 60) people in employment are more likely than their younger colleagues to be aligned to their organisations' values. But it does not allow us to conclude that older people will be more likely to be engaged with their organisation values: Table 2

has demonstrated that there is a rapid reduction in the UK employment rate of those aged over 50, and one reason for this may be a result of value mis-alignment as contributing to a decision to retire early so that only employees who are aligned to their organisation's values seek to, and feel able to, remain in employment.

Senior managers also feel more loyal to their organisations than other staff. Table 31 (b) shows that 88.8% of 51-60 year olds; 82.3% of 41-50 year olds, and 84.2 % of 31-40 year old senior managers feel loyal or very loyal to their organisation. For all other staff the percentages are, respectively, 72.8%; 71.1%; and 68.6%.

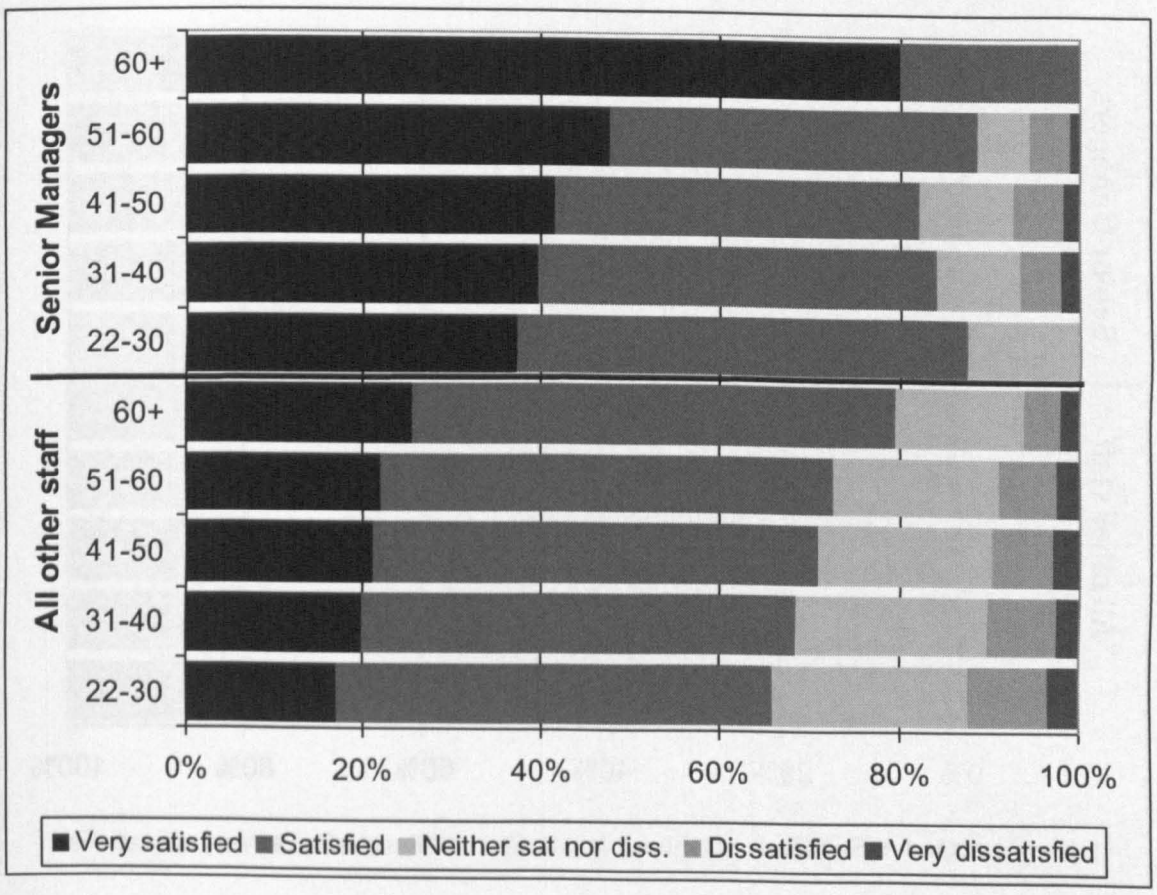
The third WERS 2004 question considered to what extent respondents felt 'proud to tell people who they worked for (Table 31 (c)). Again, there is a shaper distinction between senior managers and non managerial staff. 80.3% of senior managers, aged 51-60 said that they were proud to tell people who they worked for; as did 74.4% of 41-50 year olds; and 79.7% of 31-40 year old senior managers. For all other staff, 60.2% of 51-60 year old; 60.1% of 41-50 year old; and 59.9% of 31-40 year old non management staff were satisfied or very satisfies to say who they worked for.

Overall, therefore, the WERS questionnaires showed that senior managers were more positive than non managerial staff on values, loyalty, and pride, as measured by WERS 2004. At senior management levels, WERS 2004 shows similar levels of values, pride and loyalty at all age range levels, but with those aged 51-60 more positive in shared values and organisational loyalty, however, senior managers in the 22-30 year age range slightly more likely than 51-60 year olds to be proud to tell people who they worked for.



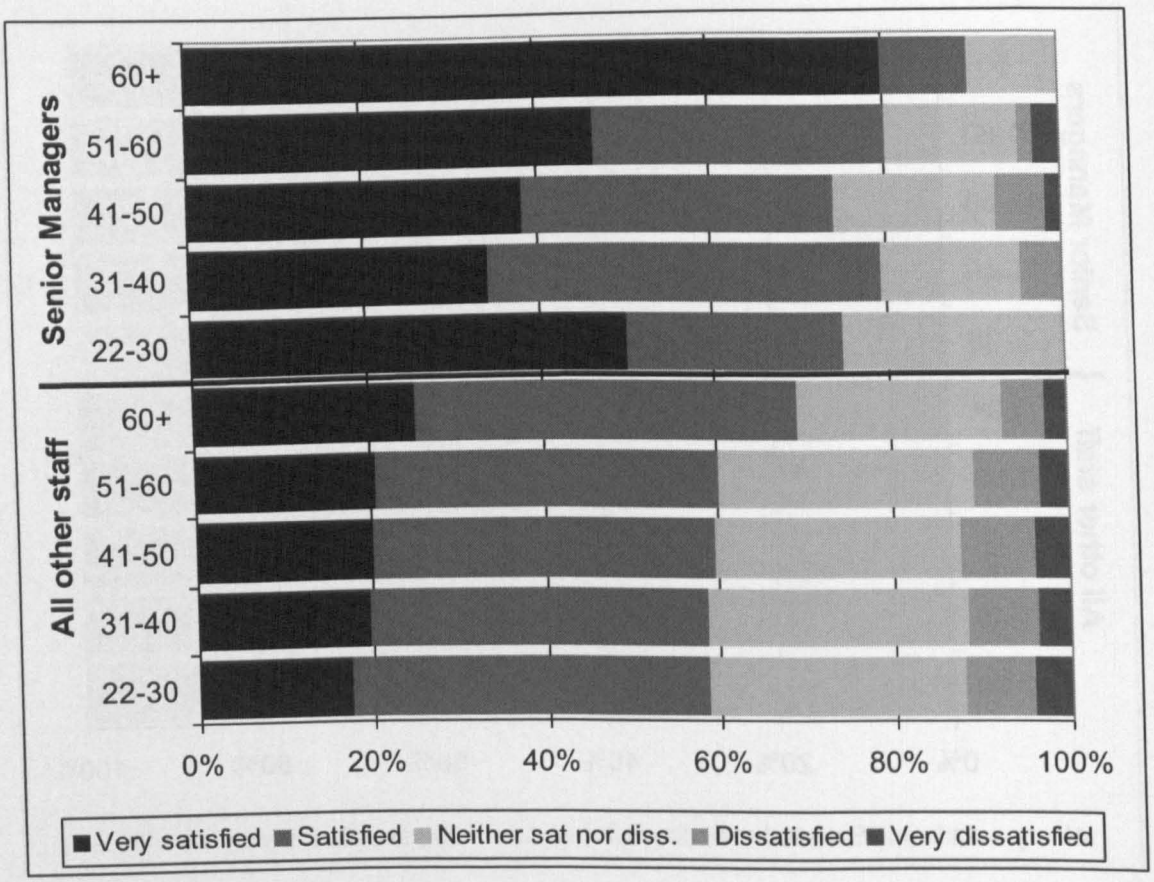
	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	9.0%	40.3%	37.6%	10.3%	2.8%
	31-40	10.9%	43.0%	34.4%	9.3%	2.5%
	41-50	12.7%	44.1%	31.3%	9.1%	2.8%
	51-60	13.8%	45.6%	29.0%	9.1%	2.5%
	60+	16.2%	48.0%	27.2%	6.9%	1.7%
Senior Managers	22-30	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	.0%
	31-40	30.6%	46.3%	15.7%	5.6%	1.9%
	41-50	34.1%	48.0%	13.4%	3.9%	.6%
	51-60	43.4%	38.7%	10.4%	6.6%	.9%
	60+	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%

Table and Graph 31(a) to Show Responses to 'I Share Many of the Values of My Organisation'
Source WERS 2004, QC1a
Senior Managers N=416; All Other staff N=22637



	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	17.0%	49.0%	21.8%	8.9%	3.3%
	31-40	19.9%	48.7%	21.2%	7.8%	2.4%
	41-50	21.2%	49.9%	19.4%	6.5%	3.0%
	51-60	22.0%	50.8%	18.4%	6.5%	2.4%
	60+	25.8%	53.9%	14.2%	4.1%	1.9%
Senior Managers	22-30	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	.0%	.0%
	31-40	39.8%	44.4%	9.3%	4.6%	1.9%
	41-50	41.7%	40.6%	10.6%	5.6%	1.7%
	51-60	47.7%	41.1%	5.6%	4.7%	.9%
	60+	80.0%	20.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%

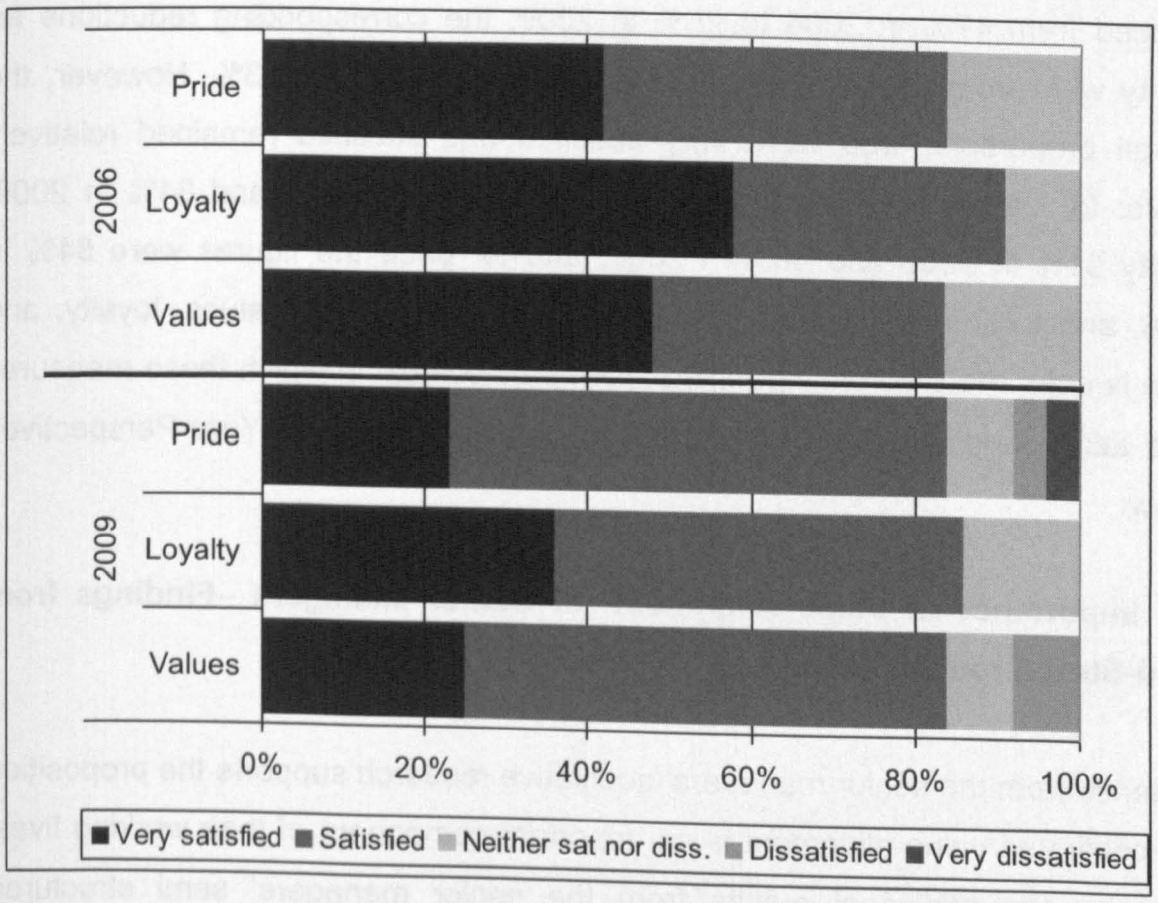
Table and Graph 31(b) to Show Responses to 'I Feel Loyal to My Organisation '
Source WERS 2004, QC1b
Senior Managers N=416; All Other staff N=22637



	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	17.5%	41.3%	29.2%	7.9%	4.0%
	31-40	19.6%	39.3%	29.7%	7.9%	3.5%
	41-50	20.2%	39.5%	28.2%	8.2%	3.9%
	51-60	20.7%	39.5%	29.2%	7.5%	3.1%
	60+	25.5%	44.1%	23.3%	4.8%	2.3%
Senior Managers	22-30	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	.0%	.0%
	31-40	34.3%	45.4%	15.7%	4.6%	.0%
	41-50	38.3%	36.1%	18.3%	5.6%	1.7%
	51-60	46.7%	33.6%	15.0%	1.9%	2.8%
	60+	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%

Table and Graph 31(c) to Show Responses to 'I am Proud to Tell People Who I Work For'
Source WERS 2004, QC1b
Senior Managers N=416; All Other staff N=22637

The WERS 2004 analysis was contrasted by asking the same questions of the senior management cohort (N=26), both in 2006 and 2009. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 32 below.



		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
2009	Values	25.0%	59.0%	8.0%	8.0%	.0%
	Loyalty	36.0%	50.0%	14.0%	.0%	.0%
	Pride	23.0%	61.0%	8.0%	4.0%	4.0%
2006	Values	47.0%	35.0%	16.0%	.0%	.0%
	Loyalty	58.0%	33.0%	9.0%	.0%	.0%
	Pride	42.0%	42.0%	16.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 32. Table and Graph to Show Changes in Senior Manager Cohort Values, Loyalty, and Pride, 2006-2009
Source Author Research; N=26

This table shows the strength of Values, Loyalty, and Pride for senior managers in the research cohort, but that there was some deterioration over the three year

course of the study, both in terms of those considering themselves to be very satisfied, and in the small numbers who, by 2009, expressed themselves as very dissatisfied. Senior managers saying that they were 'very satisfied' with values reduced from 47% in 2006 to 25% in 2009; the corresponding reductions for loyalty were from 58% to 36%, and for pride from 42% to 23%. However, the overall proportions who were very satisfied and satisfied remained relatively stable: for values the combined figures were 82% in 2006 and 84% in 2009, loyalty 91% in 2006 and 86% in 2009, and for pride the figures were 84% in 2006, and 84% in 2009. This stability of senior managers' values, loyalty, and pride is even more surprising for the economic context in which these measures were taken, and are discussed further in section 5.6, 'Three Year Perspective', below.

The Importance of Value Alignment for Senior Managers –Findings from Semi-Structured Interviews

Evidence from the senior managers' qualitative research supports the proposition that continued value alignment is an important component of their working lives. However, the additional results from the senior managers' semi structured interviews demonstrated that senior managers' positive views from the quantitative research (Table 32) were subject to caveat and qualification. A Senior Manager (*Financial Services A, Male, Age 42*) expressed clear alignment with organisation goals,

> '*Yes, the organisational goals and values are clear. I feel aligned to them I am asked to contribute in terms of what they should be, which is good*'.

Equally, a degree of difference between personal view and organisational approach was '*normal, even healthy' Senior Manager, Manufacturing E Male Age 55.* But the respondents also gave examples of where, over time, organisational values and individual values became blurred, through the perceived pace of change in those values, leading to '*more of a veneer of integrity' (Senior HR*

Manager, Age 55, Financial Services). A second manager (*Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55)* thought himself '*very aligned [to organisational values] as much as I understand them because I do have to say the goalposts keep shifting'.* In other cases, blurring of senior managers' values could become emotionally confused and fractured

> *An 'emotional swing' where I can sort of wake up one morning and think 'no, no, this is not right because it is absolutely fundamental to the organisation'. And then there are other occasions where I can think 'yes, but there are reasons why we are here'. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Male Age 54*

As she was leaving her current organisation, one senior manager observed

> *I have been almost pushed to do things that are to my mind dishonest and don't sit with my value set. Yes, I could put a positive spin on things so it doesn't frighten people but asked to be dishonest and deceptive is not on...or even withholding information when people are making decisions. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41*

Senior managers were well aware of the differences between their own values, the values espoused by the organisation, and the values adopted by the organisation, *'the stated values, and then there's values you get from observing the culture'* as one respondent expressed it *(Senior Manager, Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44).* A Business Director, *(Male, Financial Services, A, Age 47)* spoke of having to report to six different senior executives in six years, and of integrity issues, since *'the culture the organisation espouses in TV advertising is not the culture we work to'.* Another younger manager in the cohort recognised that she would only *'challenge behaviours up to 70%',* but *'not go to the 'endth' to challenge some of the very bullish people I hate to say that, but*

that's probably the truth' (Senior HR Manager, Female, Financial Services A, Age 40).

Reasons for differences between organisation and personal values

The reasons for challenging values varied. For one respondent, it was where they might clash with staff and customer needs '*So yes, so there was certainly a time where I thought we weren't behaving in a way that was actually right or appropriate for either staff or customers'. (Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 48).* A second senior manager (*Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing, Female, Age 45)* spoke of her discomfort in the organisation's values in people management

> *It is very process focused and to my mind is not people focused enough, where I think we can far greater benefits by looking after the people better in developing people and investing in people. We invest huge amounts of money in people here, but I don't think in the right way.*

In a third case, a respondent (*Director, Own Company, Female, G, Age 44)* spoke of discomfort in how colleague managers were managed

> *It [a senior manager misleading his managers about work progress] just didn't feel ethical at all. It cuts across my value set really, I suppose....When I saw someone operating in this way, I thought 'nah, I don't like this really'.*

Other reasons identified as potentially leading to values clashes included the desire to have a degree of autonomy and not be over-supervised in their work (*Senior Manager, Financial Services L, Age 48)*, and even a chief executive expressed the preference to have a higher degree of autonomy, criticising, albeit

in a semi-humorous way, the constraints he felt on his freedom to act from a more junior colleague

> *I do find at times, I do get frustrated by the process inherent in some of those values because I want to move on...xx (named colleague) is the alter ego of this organisation, and sometimes it frustrates me to hell! Chief Executive, Not for Profit, Male Age 55*

In the public sector, the need to take account of political considerations could also lead to value conflict, *I am not sure if I enjoy behaving politically or politically to overcome the odds in order to deliver... It's a kind of necessary evil! Senior Manager, Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44.* Even at some of the most senior levels of the organisation, long serving senior managers could feel so strongly about a point of principle that they could come close to leaving the organisation, such as when a commitment to staff not to reduce of staff numbers had been reversed *Senior Director Financial Services A, Male, Age 59*

Consequences of Value Differences

The interviews provided strong evidence of how and where senior managers felt that their values may be compromised, although there was no evidence from this research of different challenges in values between the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups. Senior managers discussed individual and organisational values, and how these were reconciled, so that difficult decisions could be implemented. For example, one woman manager, *(Senior Manager, Financial Services, Not for Profit, L Age 48)* who had previously explained how values and behaviours developed through group discussion and consensus explained how she pragmatically then felt comfortable to apply what had been agreed. Senior managers were well aware when unpalatable decisions needed to be taken for business viability

At the end of the day, you have to accept the position he was in [to reduce staff numbers] ...something had to be done...we had to take some costs out so you know in a way you didn't like doing it...we have removed some of the 'cement' that holds the building blocks together. Director, Manufacturing, H Male Age 54

Thoughts of leaving because of value conflict could be inter-twined with tenacity to improve things in the workplace, especially where long term loyalty to the organisation was also present. An Area Director had thought of leaving because of treatment of staff and customers, and had been in advanced discussions with another organisation, but decided to stay as *'I still hoped or thought I could exert more influence to a company that was very special to me – from within'. (Financial Services A Male, Age 48).* With age, some of the older senior managers acknowledged that, with a different organisation, and older age, they had mellowed,

I mean it's amazing that O did so well, but the management culture was appalling, absolutely appalling. So I stuck it until they fired me!... I think I have probably quietened down a bit. Not so 'I must have this done by yesterday' mentality'. Senior Manager, Manufacturing E Male Age 55

In other cases, they were able to reconcile value differences, on the grounds that they could later influence company policy, for example a Senior Manager,*(Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44)* had considered leaving when, *'management decisions were being taken which I really thought were putting the whole team in jeopardy'.*

However, over the three year course of the study, it was possible to see the outcome of managers' careers who had felt uncomfortable in the values with what they were being asked to do, and how they resolved this discomfort. A Senior HR Manager, *(Financial Services A, Female, Age 44)* who commented on

turf wars and so, '*We are really really (sic) risking things going off*'. Another Senior HR Manager, this time from manufacturing (*Female, Age 45*) explained how gradual value conflict could lead to resignation from the organisation

> *I have a very strong values and belief set, which is sometimes why I have got myself probably into trouble – I don't think [name of company] would ever push me to a point of actually resigning, but if I felt that something was drastically wrong, I probably would resign if I felt that it was that*

From this research sample, values appeared to be important to senior managers, irrespective of age, but the ways in which they dealt with value conflict (and the consequences of those differences) did vary with age. Managers in the younger age group (40-49) were more likely to compromise their personal views and accept the organisation view. In 2006, a Senior Manager said he would have taken voluntary redundancy. *Because I am not prepared to compromise my family life, purely for work [staying over night in London three days a week]. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44.* By 2009, in the follow up research questionnaire, this manager had been promoted, and as a consequence was now living in London three nights a week, and commented, *The world moves on and I'm now commuting to London and waiting on the outcome of the latest restructure to see if they still want my services.*

The perceived consequence of challenging organisation values was eventual job loss *' because I would be worried that somebody would turn round and then you know, ... force me out of what I really enjoy doing most, which is my job'. Senior HR Manager, Female, Financial Services A, Age 40.* As if to illustrate this manager's point, the three year period of the research gave the opportunity to track the consequences of deterioration in personal and organisation values, and the implications when older (over age 50) managers experienced value clash. For example, an older senior manager, *(Male, Financial Services, A, Age 52)* said in 2006

> *My values have been brought into question but I still manage my personal environment well. I am OK with the integrity of the environment which has been quite important, but I have been able to steer myself out where I haven't agreed with policy*

But by 2009, the position had further deteriorated to such an extent that he reported

> *It frustrates me to see double standards. A preference for people we like, whilst for others we play it by the book. It challenges my values and personal integrity ...With the relentless march of youth, my dinosaur status is even more apparent. (Senior HR Manager, now age 55, Financial Services A)*

This senior manager was retired from the organisation by mutual consent in December 2009. However, the research also gave more stark examples of senior managers who, in 2006, had expressed their misgivings about organisation values, but who, by 2009, have left their organisations, despite a desire to remain to normal retirement age. An Area Director, *(Financial Services A, Male, 54)* spoke in 2006 of his *'very high standards of openness and honesty... if someone questions my integrity, I am not prepared to compromise it'* was early retired against his preference to continue working in 2009. Similarly, in 2006, a Headteacher spoke of the tension between meeting central targets, but without regard to local circumstances, so that he did *'have some alienation from the goals'. Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55.* This was one of two Headteachers interviewed, both male, and both in their mid fifties, and both of whom had left their posts by the time of the research follow up in 2009, and found new roles in education, but not as Headteachers. Overall, within three years, five of the ten senior managers aged over fifty, and two from the sixteen managers aged forty to forty nine from the original research cohort, had said in their questionnaires that they agreed with their organisational values in 2006, but

expressed reservations in their interviews, and had left their career roles by 2009; a further senior manager left his organisation in March 2010, just after the end of the research time frame. So, eight of the twenty six managers who had expressed possible value conflict had left their organisations over the three year period of this study: two on redundancy, and six on early retirement terms. Of course, this is not to suggest that value conflict was the only reason for termination, and other factors were possible but were not investigated, such as health, work performance not meeting required standards, personal circumstances, etc. However, this evidence shows rich data for value conflict as an important factor in termination of employment, and demonstrates the stark paradox of having senior managers with strong values beliefs, and the tenacity to stay and 'put things right', contrasted with the need of the organisation to have senior managers whose values are aligned with what and how the organisation seeks to achieve its goals.

This evidence is not intended to suggest that senior managers over the age of 50 had stronger values than those aged 40-49, nor that the likelihood of 'doublethink' or 'value bracketing' was any different from their younger colleagues. The qualitative research findings do suggest that some managers over the age of 50 had become wearier in managing values difference (for example, '*my dinosaur status*'). However, other than their relative seniority which may give them more authority to challenge value difference, this older group also enjoyed the backstop of early retirement programmes if things became too unpalatable, as an Area Director noted

> *The retirement packages available in our [banking] industry have been very attractive for people to retire, or to leave the business early, and have been actively encouraged to do that in the past. (Financial Services A, Male, 54)*

The facility available from early retirement packages to reshape working lives was also available in the public sector and provided an attractive opportunity for two of the four public sector managers, for example.

> *I think it [leaving before age 60] will somewhat depend on the package available...And if that opportunity was to facilitate me to leave, I would certainly consider it, yes. Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55*

> *I really like the sound of flexible retirement and if that's kind of – if more of those things develop as the work force ages, then I would be very interested in that because I would want to start building up life outside of here. Senior Manager, Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44*

But even without the prospect of early retirement packages, younger managers were already planning for work/life changes in their fifties

> *At 50, I want to be in a position where the mortgage is paid off and I will not have to work...I would set something up in my forties and then work for myself in my fifties, but perhaps doing it on a reduced hours basis if I wanted to Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41*

Whilst some of the negative implications of early retirement packages will be discussed in Chapter 6, the liberation which they could give senior managers was clear. For those more fortunate, planning, a final salary pension, and good luck brought their own bounties. A Senior Manager, *(Financial Services A, Male Age 54)* who left his career organisation in 2008 for another role in a financial services organisation commented in 2006

> *Fantastic! I mean I am in an exceptionally privileged position of a guaranteed offer of retirement whenever I want so I am in almost complete control. And it's a great position to be*

Not all senior managers interviewed were in such a 'great position', so a separate area of enquiry was to consider how they responded to career challenges.

5.4 Career Challenges: Resilience, Plateau and Burnout

Resilience

All of the managers interviewed had, at some stages in their careers, faced challenges which they had felt might overwhelm them. As a result of coming to terms with those challenges, many of them felt that they had crossed a Rubicon, after which they had become stronger as managers. Bennis and Thomas (2002) define these challenges as 'crucibles of leadership', and Goleman (1998) as periods requiring resilience. Within management literature, 'resilience' is a term which may be often used, but rarely defined. Luthans (2002) defines resilience (P702), and Hamel and Valikangas (2003) set a practical test for a resilient organisation as 'that can't be true', to 'we must face the world as it is' (P5). Rutter (1985) links resilience with survivorship, an area further explored by Coutu (2002). Overall, however, the management literature on resilience is diffuse, and Ollier-Malaterre (2010) comments that work-life and resilience initiatives are under demonstrated both theoretically and empirically (P 42). In particular, literature fails to make clear what resilience is, whether the aim of resilience is to thrive against adversity as an individual, or to survive within the organisation, even if that means suppressing personal values and growth to do so. This section will contribute research findings which explore some of the events requiring high personal challenge will be examined, and the implications discussed in Chapter 6.

Resilience and Work Demands

From the research cohort, senior managers' examples of facing challenges at work which clashed with their personal values have already been discussed. Managers were able to give further illustrations of times when they recognised that resilience was important. A manager from *Financial Services, A* gave an example of high adversity when dealing with a situation he had not seen coming, but that dealing with it had made him a tougher character, and *'if it happened again I would feel more confident to know about how to deal with it' (Male Age 42).* A second manager spoke of the high learning curve of a new role, which was

> *So tough, I nearly didn't get out of the car one morning, but in the end I grew up very quickly and learned. I found that I was no longer in the same camp as my boss. Stuck with my principles. Can now deal with top executives. Business Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 46*

Another manager spoke of overwhelming work volume which brought him to the brink of resignation

> *I actually wrote my resignation letter out,[but did not send it] that's how low it got. Simply just not supported. Being asked to deliver what I think was totally unacceptable amounts of business. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44*

High business challenge which not only would affect his personal circumstances, but also those of many working in the company was experienced by a *Director, Manufacturing, H Male Age 54*

> *My boss is quite good and quite supportive but the problem is that this year we will make bugger all profit. Having a budget of £3m we are probably going to make nothing...and we are all working bloody hard. It's*

demoralising when we are not going to get a bonus, you've worked your bloody socks off and now you know if they had half a chance they would sell the company.

The company was sold one year after this interview in 2006, the director lost his job, as did employees who worked in sites not bought by the new owners of the business. As in the case of the director from manufacturing, having some support whilst facing adversity, and knowing there was a way out if necessary, were valued by managers facing adversity, and helped them to cope with the pressures

At my lowest point last year my partner said to me 'if it's really, really that terrible, just leave and do something else' and um,...it was great to have that support actually. Senior Manager, Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44

Further examples of situations which stretched senior managers' resilience included issues from their personal lives and working relationships.

Resilience and Personal Lives

As complex as organisational challenges may have been, the lifecourse of senior managers also presented high personal and domestic challenges, including marriage breakdowns, bereavement of partners, and children, chronic illness, as well as family dislocation from house relocation. A Director, *(Manufacturing, H Male Age 54)* spoke of the biggest mistakes of his life when he *'Left a lovely house and a lovely factory and took a job down in London purely for a [job] title and had really gone for totally the wrong reasons'.* A Senior Manager, *(Financial Services L, Female, Age 48)* described how *'When [my husband] died you have got to continue to move forward and it doesn't matter where you are in your career'.* A Senior HRM, *(Financial Services A, Female, Age 44)* described how

she needed to rethink and provided with her the determination to readjust her career plans when

> *I was diagnosed [at the age of 25] that I had MS. Then I found out very soon after that that I couldn't have a family at all so it was a matter of refocusing my priorities in life and one priority came very much to mind and that was my job and a way of earning money to keep myself and so I decided that I was going to do it and I was going to do it well. So I put my mind to it.*

Two of the twenty six managers had suffered bereavement of children in their earlier careers. Whilst both remained committed to fulfilling careers, the bereavement defined new boundaries in working lives

> *I think it was the loss of [name of daughter who died in child birth] which really made us think what was important. You know, we had a drawer full of share certificates; we worked 7 till 7 in the evenings, both of us. And then you suddenly think, 'what's it all for?'. .. I made some decisions about the way I was going to change...and I wasn't prepared to compromise that. Senior Manager, Male, Financial Services, A, Male 44*

Resilience and Relationships within the Workplace

Longer working lives within the same organisation also seemed to increase the risk of relationship clashes, over time, with colleagues, and some of the managers interviewed indicated that continued adversity requiring resilience was still anticipated, irrespective of their age. For example, a Headteacher, *(Education, C, Male, Age 55)* felt that his *'frustration with the system is going to boil over at some point in time as well as I believe that my competency will be questioned'.* Another Senior Manager *(Financial Services A, Male Age 54)* spoke of a boss who had been *'just awful '. I have no respect for him whatever, his integrity was dreadful, in every respect, both his personal life, his work life - and it*

was truly awful' A slightly younger manager spoke of *'never any 'big bang' – but constant drips of negativity all of the time' (Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing B, Female, Age 45).* A younger manager spoke of a time when she had faced workplace adversity, but felt that, at least this time, she had not demonstrated resilience in her terms

> *I just don't think I was strong enough inside to change. I think if I was bullied and continuously bullied, I would just cave into that. It would probably make me ill. Wouldn't show on the surface, but would probably make me ill Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41*

Managers were aware that resilience may also mean adherence to their own values, rather than reshaping themselves to what their current organisation requires of them. In contrast to consideration of resilience as survivorship, resilience may mean that managers actually leave their current employers, as in the following cases

> *I was operating in quite a political world and I thought 'I want to get back to what I enjoy doing' which is working with and developing a team of people [so I am leaving the organisation] Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41*

> *I had been a loyal member of staff for how many years? -20-22?. I was well regarded....But they seemed to focus at that point of getting rid of you. And I wasn't going to do that, so I dug my heels in at that point and said 'no, I'm not going to do this – I'm going to do this on my terms not your's. Senior Manager, Financial Services L Not for Profit, Female, Age 48*

The research findings have shown how senior managers in general, and older senior managers in particular, have high satisfaction with their work (WERS

2004 analysis, shown in Appendix Q) and high affective commitment (Table 30b) and high alignment with organisational values, loyalty and pride (Tables 31a-31c). These positive results have been achieved despite perceived negative changes in psychological contract, and evidence from the senior managers' qualitative research suggesting failures in performance management practices. Overall, senior managers all spoke of times in their careers when high work or personal challenges needed to be faced and managed. But the evidence from this research demonstrates that resilience is not the same as survivorship (staying in the current organisation) if survivorship means abandoning goal achievement or values and principles. For those who had successfully made the transition through resilience, it meant both achieving goals and staying true to core values, even where some adaptation was required. Here, even older and longer serving managers continued to recognise that constant adaptation may be necessary

> *You need to be resilient and that means a degree of compromise. Would I have the bottle to say 'no' if it really compromised my values? I really don't know. But my relationships with other people still do achieve results Senior HR Manager, Male, Age 52*

The outcome of dealing successfully with high challenge also left managers feeling prepared, confident, and optimistic about their ability to deal with future challenge. A Senior Manager, *(Public Services (Education) Female, Age 44)* received feedback that she seemed to '*make a 'silk purse out of a sow's ear'*, and having faced high challenge roles now adopted the approach, *'that's a bit of light, that looks really nice over there - might not be me but if there is a kind of 2% chance'; and it did keep me here, holding the rein'.* A Business Director, *(Financial Services A, Male, Age 46)* spoke of his renewed confidence, *'You never know how much courage you have until you face it. No longer any self doubt.* Overall, the circumstances and outcomes from this research of senior managers requiring resilience in their careers are summarised in Table 33 below

Resilience Challenge	Numbers of cases	Outcome
Work Related		
Line management conflict/lack of support	6	New role inside or outside organisation (In contrast, other managers spoke of the value of support from managers, stakeholder, trustees, or partners during adversity)
Work performance and competence challenged	1	New post within 2 years
Actions which potentially compromise personal values	8	Responses varied between capitulation of own values (3 cases); issue causing friction dispersed (2 cases); ending of organisational career (3 cases)
High challenge work assignments	2	Strong self belief Willingness to take on future tough assignments
Learning Curve (new role)	1	New role learned, Increased confidence
Discriminatory Practices Harassment/Bullying/ Inappropriate behaviours	Gender 9 Age 18 (Experienced, observed, or initiated by senior manager)	9 gender discrimination cases reported but in each case senior manager did not take action In only 2 cases did senior managers successfully confront age discrimination (Not-for-profit organisation)
Failure to promote/ re-appointment	2	Case 1'Tougher, better able to cope' Case 2 – early retired 2 years later
Personal Life		
Child/partner bereavement	3	Determination to carry on with new focus on work/life priorities
Chronic sickness onset	1	Determination to carry on with new focus on work/life priorities
Moving job and family for 'wrong reasons'	1	Stay in new role but find new role when possible

Table 33 Summary of Senior Managers' Examples of Situations Requiring Resilience and Outcomes
Source Senior Managers' Cohort N=26 Semi-structured interviews

Career Plateau and Career Burnout

The literature review has considered concepts of career plateau, defined as 'The point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low' (Ference, Stoner, and Warren, 1977, P602). Career plateau was clearly explained by a senior manager who described it in the following terms as a tacitly acknowledged state that promotion or continued value of personal contribution in the current function is unlikely.

> *I think it almost becomes a situation where people realise once they reach a certain age that they are not going to progress in that particular area of the organisation so they are just going to have to move across. Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55*

In the above example, plateau was directly linked to an age band of 35-40 in the media sector, and not to that person's continued competence in a role. But plateau could also be induced by a lack of willingness from the manager to continue to live with the values or working relationships in the current organisation. For one senior manager, *(Director, Own Company, Female, G, Age 44)* this became the time to realise that she could not continue where she was

> *I didn't actually want to go in to work. And that was the time to get out. I have never ever felt like that before. And that was the time to get out... I was working for someone I didn't respect*

Managers at all ages were aware that future promotions could become elusive. A Director, *(Female, Manufacturing, F, Age 46)* said she was '*at a point of uncertainty, possibly feeling as if I have left it all a little bit kind of late kind of thing because I am 46'*. Older senior managers in their fifties were aware

especially that career plateau could be on the agenda, even where this may not have been specifically discussed with them

> *My impression is that my next job would have to be light administrative chores...I don't know where that notion came from, but in that phase when I was looking at alternative jobs, I think I was looking, 'oh well, they wont want somebody of my age doing that. I don't know where that notion came from. Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55*

(This Headteacher was moved to a non-Head role two years after the interview). Another senior manager, anticipating financial security but possible career plateau when aged in his fifties, already expected to want to leave the organisation for a different role

> *Financially secure, let's go and do something that is different and maybe gives me a better work/life balance. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Male, Age 42*

Where managers acknowledged that their careers had plateaued, coping strategies varied. For example, a *Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing B, Female, Age 45* spoke of *'5 year cycles then I get bored with things then I'll want to do something different'.* Mentoring more junior managers was mentioned by several managers as a way of continuing to feel valued, and enabling a two way relationship which shared knowledge within the organisation. An area director consciously involved himself in a range of additional activities for this reason

> *I get involved with work groups, strategic forums, shadow responsibilities and other aspects that enable me to broaden my involvement in the business and to give me another interest beyond the day job. Area Director, Financial Services A, Age 54, Male*

But for other managers who considered themselves to have reached a plateau, organisation restructures gave fresh opportunity, tainted with feelings of guilt towards the rest of the team

> *When I found that I didn't have a role within the new structure, I just felt relief. I felt sadness that I was going to have to tell my team the next day that two thirds of them didn't have a job but for me personally I just felt relief that this is going to open up new opportunities for me and I just felt really positive Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 41*

Another manager said how *'it's dented my confidence dreadfully...I am losing confidence and because I just feel so frustrated and that concerns me, almost what it is doing to me makes me feel less viable'. (Senior HRM, Financial Services A, Female, Age 44)*

Career burnout was discussed in the literature review, and used Schaufeli, Taris, and van Rhenen's description (2008) as a state of mental weariness. It was also noted that burnout could include feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, reduced sense of personal accomplishment, (Burke, 1993); and exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of professional efficacy feelings of insufficiency and poor job-related self-esteem (Maslach,1993).

Of the twenty six managers interviewed, two managers demonstrated signs of burnout during the interviews in 2006. The first felt that he had been *'hung, drawn and quartered for when I have had bad results' (Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55*). By 2009, this Headteacher had moved to an alternative role, still in education, but not as a Headteacher. The second manager (*Financial Services A, Female, Age 47)* reflected on the first research interview in 2006, and in the follow up contact in 2009 spoke of how a change of organisation had restarted her career and restored self confidence

My confidence had been trashed and it was time to change my life. It was the best decision I ever made

Given the challenges which the senior managers had faced in their careers, to find that only two managers had experienced career burnout in 2006 was surprising. However, by 2009, both had re-established themselves in new roles, with new organisations. So, whilst career burnout was traumatic at the time, both had renewed their careers.

5.5 Ending of Career

The literature review considered the complexity of factors leading to retirement decisions. Achenbaum (2005) observed that older age is the most heterogeneous stage of life, whilst Crown (1996) cautioned on the complexity of trying to identify reasons why some wish to retire early. Other research has identified the availability of social security support, the position of the labour market, organisations' demand or other incentives to retire early, and early retirement cultures. (Esser, 2005 and Hardy and Quadagno, 1995), or norms related to pensions availability and incentives (Ekerdt 1998). Flynn (2010) noted that employers' practices in relation to retirement may not be fully reflected in their published HR policies (P8), and, Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008) found that that ultimately organisations decide when an employee retires. The findings from this research will be discussed under Beehr's (1986) three variables categorisation of: personal; work-related, and retirement related.

Ending of Career – Personal Factors

In the Not-For-Profit sector, both the Chief Executive *(Male Age 55)* and Head of HR, Female, Not-for-Profit, *(Female. Age 49)* planned to continue their careers into an older, loosely defined age, and did not anticipate many barriers to doing so. Both were happy with their roles, and both had family commitments which

meant that continued work was necessary as well as being desirable. Within their sectors, age was not expected to be an obstacle, though the Head of HR thought that '*age might be a barrier in my late fifties for getting a new job. But I still think that I'll be physically fit enough to work..until I am 65, even 70'.* Whether or not their spouse or partner were working also featured in thinking about retirement dates, so that a Senior HR Manager, *(Female, Financial Services A, Age 40)* planned to retire

> *Early fifties I would hope, because C [husband] can retire at that stage. I feel then I will have worked for 30 years and I will have done – I have not got this in my head that you retire at 60....I want to take some time back for ourselves*

So this manager still planned to retire in her fifties, in ten years time, despite the planned increase in retirement ages to 65. However, adjusting career goals to those of a spouse or partner did not necessarily mean early retirement: another woman manager (*Director, Female, Manufacturing, F, Age 46)* planned to continue working well after her partner had retired, but of her own career plans she had *' given up on making a big splash. I've got someone else who is making the big splash and I'll just help him on the way'.* Some managers felt unable to face the prospect of retirement, and saw it in negative terms *I hate the word 'retirement', with its connotations of old age, no longer useful, no longer contributing. It smacks of newspapers, slippers...death. Headteacher, Male, Age 54 Public Services C.* Others saw a time when they would still be active, often working in the voluntary sector or 'giving something back to the community'.

> *I don't have a career or life plan. At age 62 even 67, I'd like to be in the voluntary sector, financially secure, but doing things I believe in. Senior Manager, Male, Age 40, Public Services*

Making a difference and adding value somewhere, so I would like to go and do some kind of voluntary work, working for organisations something like that I think. Senior HR Manager, Manufacturing B, Female, Age 45

I want to retire on my 55th Birthday. One of the reasons I would like to finish at that age is because there are a lot of things that I would like to do that I don't have the time to do. Senior Manager, Financial Services A, Female, Age 48

I've achieved a lot in my career and whilst I've got my energy and my health I would like the opportunity of putting something back into the community from which I have drawn so much during my career and indeed, before my career. Senior Director, Financial Services A, Male, Age 59

Managers, both male and female, were also influenced by the retirement experiences of their fathers, for example *'my father has enjoyed the last 15 years' retirement, but if I can achieve that earlier, then I'll have a longer time to spend enjoying that time', (Female, Financial Services A, Age 40),* and *'My Dad retired with great relief on his 64th birthday and enjoyed 20 years of retirement , going to the bowling green five days a week ...so the role model in front of me is that retirement works'. Headteacher, Education, C, Male, Age 55.* But the role models of parent's retirement were not always positive

I don't think I could really just retire like my Father did. I can't imagine just sitting around at home. Senior Manager, Financial Services L, Female, Age 48

So whilst personal circumstance related to managers' retirement plans, most managers framed their responses on retirement around work related issues.

Ending of Career - Work-related factors

Reflecting expectations about work capabilities when they would be in their fifties, and the findings on social construction of age in Chapter 4, senior managers expected both to want to do something different, but also expected no longer to be seen to having the energy necessary to perform their current career roles. An Area Director *(Financial Services A, Male, Age 48)* spoke of a time when

> *'I am now beginning to feel my age, I'm beginning to feel a bit tired, I don't feel able to give as much as I have always given, or compete as well as I have always competed or add value, and maybe it is time I actually go and do something quite different.*

Therefore in contrast with the perceived freedom to chose when and how they would finish work observed within the Not-For-Profit sector, the expectations of most managers from the public sector, manufacturing, and financial services sectors was that they would be seen as lacking in the energy for their roles, necessitating a change to less demanding work, or early retirement. It was difficult during the interviews to separate whether these managers' plans to retire in their fifties reflected a genuine desire to retire in their fifties, or a need to adjust their life and career plans to the inevitability that they, like colleagues before them, would be expected to retire in their fifties (and not age 60 as provided for in many of their pension schemes, nor age 65 as provided for in the UK EE(A) R default retirement age). Furthermore, despite the positive anticipated benefits which managers, especially those in their forties who planned to retire in their fifties anticipated, those actually going through retirement were sometimes more sanguine. A Senior Director, *(Male, Financial Services A, Aged 59)* spoke of having *'managers who have been advised that they are approaching retirement in my room in tears at the sudden loss of contact'.*

Despite the numbers of senior managers in the 40-49 age band planning to retire in their fifties, those who had actually reached the 50-59 age range still expressed interest in continuing or developing their careers. The thesis has already discussed issues of perceived and actual age discrimination which made them reluctant or unable to pursue those plans (see Chapter 4). Managers who wanted to continue their careers, but in a different professional line, expected and experienced obstacles. So, in addition to the actual and perceived barriers of workplace ageism discussed in Chapter 4, this Director, *(Manufacturing, H Male Age 54)* was limited by pension constraints which left him *'forced into doing a job you don't want to do'*

> *I'd rather be in purchasing and when you get to my age you start thinking about your pension and everything else. So if I could find a job in procurement tomorrow I would go, but then you think about the effect on your pension*

In summary, the research suggested that all but three (all women) of senior managers in the forty to forty nine year age band wanted to 'do something different' in their fifties. Plans included '*working in a non hierarchical role', working in the voluntary sector, financially secure, to age 62, even 67'. 'doing something I enjoy', 'different roles',* or simply *'enjoying ourselves'.* Once they were in their fifties, senior managers were coming to terms with a different reality – whilst two of the respondents (Chief Executive, Not-For-Profit, and Senior Manager, Manufacturing) expected to continue to a retirement date in their sixties, the remaining managers found over the three year course of the study that their working lives were changing as a result of redundancy, enforced early retirement, voluntary early retirement, downgrading to a lower grade role,and removal from role. One interpretation of this is that managers in their forties were well aware of organisation opportunities or expectations that they would leave the organisation in their fifties and sought to adjust their working life plans accordingly. However, Chapter 4 has demonstrated that by the time they were

now in their fifties, awareness of the age discrimination law was substituted by the realities of their perceptions of organisational life, with managers negotiating progress through a jobs market, seeking new challenges, with expected (not always with justification) obstructions based on their age.

Ending of Career – Retirement-related factors

The semi structured interviews showed that senior managers' retirement plans were very diverse, adjusting to life plans coinciding with their sixtieth birthday (for example, a desire to *'get some kind of job at the Olympics' (Senior Manager, Media/Public Sector, K, Male, Age 55)* to *'no plans because Retirement is too long away to think about, but I ... I want to be outside financial services and in a non hierarchical role' Business Director, Male, Financial Services, A, Age 47).* For other managers interviewed, there was no existing culture or policy to impose retirement at age 65 or 60, so that *'..we've had [people working to] age 69/70. I suppose I would feel quite upset for people if they were made to retire' Director, Female, Manufacturing, F, Age 46.* However, such sensitivity about the feelings and employment rights expressed by that manager, were not experienced by other managers in the cohort. An area director, retired by his organisation in 2009, said in 2006 that he

> *Enjoyed what I do, I'm very good at what I do, and I have no intentions of retiring earlier because I fully expect to work until I'm 60 years of age. Area Director, Financial Services A, Male, 54*

Despite this senior manager's determination to remain in role, employed by the organisation, and a subsequent geographical move during the three years of this research period, he left his employment at short notice in the summer of 2009 at the age of 57. Actual or perceived expectations of age discrimination restricted and confused respondents' career choices as they got older. A director, *(Manufacturing, H Male Age 54)* felt *trapped...because if I resigned I think the*

possibility of me getting another job would be quite remote, so basically you don't resign. Similarly, a Headteacher, *(Male, Age 54 Public Services C)* had not seen age discrimination, but would be, *' reluctant to apply for other roles as I feel I'd be considered too old...but I have just been appointed as an OFSTED inspector'*

5.6 Three Year Perspective of Working Lives and Career

In the discussion of concepts of careers in the literature review, both Super and Levinson et al(1978, 1992) identified career stages, with Super's classic 1957 model considering a Maintenance Stage at age 44-64 years and Levinson et al (1978, 1992) identifying further possible career stages after age fifty plus, such as middle adulthood, late adulthood transition, and late adulthood. Super also acknowledged that periods of renewal could occur at any time. Cohen and Mallon (1999) framed the term 'bureaucratic career', to describe remaining in one organisation for life. However, the context for careers is changing, with changes in demographics, organisation structures and hierarchies, and the types of employment available (Arnold, 1997).

Recognising these changes, Mirvis and Hall (1994) first used the term of 'boundaryless careers': here, career is no longer identified by moves within an organisation but through the totality of work experience and achievement, and through that person's role as a spouse, partner, parent, or member of the community (P387). This research of senior managers' experience gave the opportunity to consider the issues in older workers careers, especially against the Super and Levinson models, and the extent to which they had been exposed to concepts such as the boundaryless career.

The research cohort was first interviewed in depth in 2006, with short follow up questionnaires in 2007 (Appendix E) and 2009 (Appendix F). In contrast to the initial in depth enquiries about these senior managers, these questionnaires were intended to establish whether, in the intervening period, the senior managers had

been trained in the age implications of diversity, to consider whether their work values and organisational loyalty (Appendix H) had changed, and to determine whether their career progress and longer term retirement plans had changed since 2006.

The 2009 follow up survey has demonstrated that experiences of career in later working life are extremely difficult to predict in senior managers. In the Table 34 below, it is evident that of the 26 in the original cohort, only 7 had remained in the same or similar role, within the same organisation.

	Age 40-49 2009	Age 50+ 2009
Have now retired	0	3
Not currently employed	0	0
Now have portfolio career (different appointments)	1	2
Same organisation, bigger role	5	4
Same organisation, same role	3	4
Same organisation, smaller role	0	1
Different organisation, bigger role	1	0
Different organisation, similar role	0	0
Different organisation, smaller role	0	2
Included in the above figures, are:		
Normal retirement	0	1
Redundancy	2	3

Table 34 Senior Manager Career Changes, 2006-2009
N=26
Source Author Research

The literature review has demonstrated that, at national level at least, there has been extensive discussion about the need for longer working lives, and a perceived need to work beyond the current SPA of age 65. It is evident, however, that this debate has not affected senior managers' plans for their retirement, as shown in Table 35, below.

By the summer of 2009, traditional stores of wealth have fallen between September 2006 and September 2009. In this period, the FTSE share index had fallen from 5909 to 5133 (Econstats, 2010) so that savings invested in shares were worth 87% of their September 2006 values; the interest rate (affecting reduced housing costs but also reduced returns on savings) fell from 4.75% to 0.5%, and the average index of house price values has fallen from an average index of approximately 100 in 2006 to 85 in 2009 (Bank of England,2010). Therefore, despite the national debate on retirement ages, the fall in pension schemes values, and the support for older working lives through the EE(A)R, the

number planning to retire from their current career roles before the age of 60 remained unchanged , except for 4 who had already achieved their ambitions to retire (see Table 35 below). Indeed, from the original cohort of 26 managers, none had had changed their minds about when they originally wanted to retire.

In the 2006 research, continuance commitment (the economic requirement to stay in the current paid employment), was not rated highly by senior managers (Table 30c), so that it may be expected that managers already believed that they would be financially secure if they left employment at an age earlier than 60. However, of those who planned to retire before age 60, all (11) were participants in Final Salary Pension Schemes, with pensions payable at age 60 (Source, Initial Survey Questionnaire, Appendix B, see also Appendix P); whilst of the 15 with no plans, or planning to retire at age 60 or above, only 4 were currently members of a Final Salary Pension Scheme. Further details of respondents' retirement plans are shown in Table 35.

	2006	2009
Have now retired from career employment	0	4
Now have portfolio career (different appointments) or lower graded role	0	5
Plan to retire before age 60	11	7
Plan to retire 60-65	11	6
Plan to retire sometime after age 65	2	2
No plans/haven't considered	2	2

Table 35 Senior Managers' Changes in Retirement Plans 2006-2009
N=26; Source Author Research

	Age* 40-49	Age*>49<60
Have now retired from career employment	0	4
Work Location Unchanged	4	9
New Work Location	5	4

Table 36 Senior Managers' Geographic Mobility, 2006 -2009
N=26
Source Author Research

*Age as at August 2009

Over the three year period of the study of the twenty six managers, overall job mobility was reviewed. The results, shown in Table 36, show that of the twenty six senior managers in the qualitative study, nine had new work locations during this research period. This data, in conjunction with that shown in Table 34 show a significant degree of fluidity in older senior managers' careers: only seven were in the same organisation and same role after three years (Table 34). These findings set in sharper context the models (Table 17) of Super (1957) and Levinson et al (1978) that ages 44-64 are a time of maintenance: the qualitative research cohort results show that ages 40-60 remain a time of great fluidity for senior managers, whether in terms of organisation, job, or geographical location.

Values, loyalty and organisational pride

Values, loyalty and organisational pride of the senior manager cohort (N=26) were measured in 2006, 2007, and 2009, using the WERS 2004 'Your Views on Working Here 'questions (Appendix H). The results were shown in Table 32, and further discussed in relation to the semi structured interviews.

The three years between 2006 and 2009 represented a turbulent period in organisational workplaces, with unemployment increased to 7.9% (ONS 2010d), a reduction in Gross Domestic Product of 5.2% in the year to Quarter 3, 2009 (Source ONS 2010b). Furthermore, for those working in financial services, which represented 54% of the senior manager cohort, the period reflected a historic collapse in public confidence and of the role and remuneration of financial service in general, and 'outrage about financial services management' in particular, (for example Stern, 2010).

Despite these challenges, senior managers saying that they shared values, organisational loyalty, and organisational pride changed very little between 2006, and 2009, the year following the 2008 collapse (Table 32).

Summary of Findings on Career

From the twenty six managers interviewed for this study, the research demonstrated the complexity of factors which senior mangers faced in their careers, and this complexity increased as they became older.

The WERS2004 survey results show that senior managers in general, and older senior managers in particular, are positive about their work experiences (Table series 37, Appendix Q).

Senior managers, especially those aged in their late forties and above had lived through changes in their psychological contracts within their organisations, and those changes were consistently seen in negative terms. The research evidence demonstrated the motivational importance which managers attached to believing that their individual aspirations and work contribution were recognised by their managers or by wider stakeholders. Performance management could have an important role here, but the research evidence demonstrated that twenty of the twenty six managers perceived performance feedback as predominantly focused

on performance gaps, or was entirely non existent; even more surprising were the two managers who had not even spoken to their managers.

The research interviews showed how work and personal challenges came close to overwhelming senior managers at some times in their lives and careers. Different approaches to resilience were evidenced from the research interviews. Linked with these findings, the research considered how managers coped with differences and conflicts between their own values, and those of the organisation. Managers in both the 40-49 and 50-59 age bands experienced these conflicts, but they appeared to deal with them in different ways. In the younger age band, there was evidence that managers were more worried than their older colleagues about lack of future promotion, or job loss, and so dealt with value difference through double think or value bracketing. In contrast, managers aged in their later forties and above seemed to feel more able to discuss their disappointment with a lack of recognition in their contribution, perceptions in negative changes in the psychological contract; and clashes in organisational and personal values. These older managers relied less on double think and bracketing to deal with values clash, and were more outspoken when they felt difference. However, older managers in this study were also more likely to experience job loss in this study than their younger colleagues.

Incidents of career plateau and career burnout have been explored, but only two career burnout cases were evidenced in this research cohort. Managers who had observed and experienced plateau appeared to be sanguine and pragmatic, provided that they still believed that personal and organisational values were aligned or could be reconciled. The research also gave an insight into the career stages of Levinson and Super. Here, there was evidence of career maintenance and decline, but across all ages in the 40-59 age bands, and not only restricted to those age fifty and above. On this evidence, the research suggest some support for Levinson et als' (1978) view that age 50 plus is a time of transition for employees, with conflict, questioning, and change. The experiences of the senior

managers in the research cohort also support Super's (1984) emphasis on the need for psychological fit at each career stage. However, despite the strength of value, loyalty, organisation pride and commitment evidenced in the quantitative data (but not in the qualitative results), the senior managers in the cohort spoke of transition, conflict, and questioning, and change in the 40-49 age range, as well as for those aged 50 plus. Therefore, whilst these findings support Super's (1984) findings on the importance of psychological fit, they suggest that Levinson et als proposition of of career stability in the 40 -49 age range are outmoded. The research found that new career growth was demonstrated by both male and female respondents across all age ranges.

Underlying all of the evidence on senior managers' careers remains the question of organisations' response to age. Organisational obsolescence was experienced by all but two of those managers in their fifties, and ageism appeared to be accepted as inevitable. Similarly, a significant proportion of the senior managers in their forties already had begun to plan alterative work for when they were in their fifties. Furthermore, despite the fact that the research questionnaires suggested high commitment and high value alignment (although this was not always evidenced in the semi structured interviews), managers across all age ranges spoke of a time when they could do something of value to the community, outside their current organisations. This finding begs the question of why senior managers may not feel that older workers could 'do something of value' in their current work organisations.

The final observation from this research is that senior managers who had encountered or suspected age discrimination appeared impotent to confront it, despite the EE(A)R. If senior managers fail to recognise or confront ageism when it affects them personally, it is difficult to imagine how they would do so when it affects their colleagues or the teams which they lead.

6 Discussion of Research Findings

Introduction

The introduction to this thesis noted the importance of understanding managers' attitudes and behaviours with regard to age in the workplace. It was seen that managers had a key role in determining the work experiences of older workers (Department for Education and Employment, 2000), and Bond Hollywood and Coglan (2009) recognised that support from managers at the most senior levels was essential for the integration of employment practices, including those for age. In addition to organisational responsibilities not to discriminate on the grounds of age (EE(A)R), Dychtwald, Erickson and Morrison (2005) noted the need to re-engage with older workers, before they were ready to 'take a retirement package and run' (P50). Purcell and Clark (2004) noted that the aggregate national picture on age was relatively well understood, but there had been less investigation of occupational, sector, gender, policy, and practice implications. Managers' interactions with people in organisations have also been widely reviewed in the literature study, both at the systemic level in the operation of HRM policy, (for example Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson, Rayton, and Swart, 2003, and Riach 2009) and Sayles' (1979) observation that 'The managerial job is a never-ending series of contact with other people'(P87).

In response, this research has provided rich and intimate detail on how older senior managers respond to age in the workplace. Furthermore, the three year term of the study gives insight into the development of the career lives of those senior managers. This chapter will discuss the implications from the research findings, and how this adds to our wider knowledge about senior managers as they grow older. It will address the implications of those findings around the key research themes of age and career.

The contributions which this research makes to individual managers' careers, and organisational and HRM policy and practices are summarised.

6.1 Ageism and Age Discrimination

Age and Workplace Perceptions

The research findings demonstrate that senior managers' views on age were immersed in social construction views, most of which were negative. Respondents expected their capabilities, aspirations, and opportunities to decline as they grew older, and especially after they were fifty. There was little evidence that managers were aware of the positive qualities associated with older age, which has been noted in literature review. That evidence of the potential benefits of older workers was seen to include older workers as more experienced, mature, and stable, (Goldstone and Jones, 2001, and Marshall 1995); with higher crystallised intelligence (Stuart-Hamilton,1991), age rarely accounting for more than 10% variation in manual work performance – and none for clerical workers (Rhodes,1983), whilst McCann and Giles (2002) saw little difference in performance between younger and older people and may even favour older workers. The effect of this predominantly singular and negative view of capabilities in older age leaves a perceived employment capability gap of up to fifteen years prior to the default retirement age of 65 during which senior managers expected their personal capabilities or opportunities would be in decline.

The analysis has considered respondents' interpretations of definitions of age against the frameworks of Kooij, de Lange, and Dikkers (2008), Biological Threshold age (Stuart-Hamilton,1991), Relative Age, (Cleveland and McFarlane Shore, 1992), and Lifespan age (Claes and Heymans, 2008). The research on age was undertaken in July to September 2006 and the qualitative research has demonstrated that senior managers had multiple social constructions of age, just prior to the introduction of the EE(A)R prohibiting age discrimination in employment.

These highly refined and complex understandings of 'age' and the employment related nuances go well beyond the chronological understanding of age, and demonstrate the complexity of social construction in perspectives of age, linking these with negative perceptions of older workers which have been contested in the research on the actual capabilities of older workers. Therefore, age has very different meanings for these managers, framed within their organisational contexts, their personal interpretations, and their own age.

The research has demonstrated senior managers' experience of organisational threshold ages for older age. The literature review referred to Stuart-Hamilton's (1991) suggestion that the threshold for older age is generally accepted to be 60 to 65. However, this research shows that in an organisational context, threshold for older age is considerably younger. Age 50 was often specifically or implicitly cited as an 'older' age, but further examples of age forties (Financial Services), and even mid thirties (for example, public broadcasting, financial services, and telecommunications) were identified. Furthermore, the research findings have demonstrated how senior managers in the research cohort spoke candidly of the negative perspectives with which their senior colleagues spoke of older managers in the workplace.

The research findings have demonstrated how the concept of institutional ageism may be developed and sustained through the apparently un-related but linked attitudes and behaviours of senior managers. Within one organisation (Financial Services, A), an Area Director and Senior HR Manager denied that ageism occurred, even though a senior manager within that business unit had been told that it was unlikely he would be promoted to area director once he was 48, as he would be considered too old. The Senior HR Manager had already observed that she had not see ageism and not challenged discrimination enough. Furthermore, the senior manager hoping for promotion before the age of 48 had also nervously laughed that if there was a future restructure he would be considered as too old. So, whilst waiting for a future promotion (or avoidance of redundancy), the senior

manager preferred politically to avoid challenging the organisation culture and expectations around age. This single example of ageism within Financial Services A was evidenced more widely in the research findings. Therefore, adapting from Macpherson's (Home Office 1999) definition, this research shows that institutional ageism in employment may be conceptualised as

> A systemic and tacitly accepted culture within an organisation which fails to provide equality of employment opportunity because of an employee's chronological age. It may not be apparent in equality and diversity policies, but can be seen or detected in unwritten attitudes and behaviours in recruitment, reward, behaviours, and longer term employment opportunity, which amount to age discrimination through both overt and unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and ageist stereotyping which disadvantage employees on the grounds of their age

This thesis has provided further evidence of how ageism is institutionalised, even when managers themselves understand the law and believe that they comply with it. For example, despite all the examples of ageism which have been evidenced in this research (Section 4.6), none has been challenged in law, nor even by a return comment at the time by the senior manager. Schein (1999) observes on the desire not to be seen as deviant within the [organisational] groups that you value (P64). Therefore, where cultures of ageism exist, they are sustained, despite the training which the senior managers had received in both discrimination and age discrimination (Section 4.5), as senior managers fail to challenge organisational norms, either in law, policy, or even in a returned comment to a colleague. The research has demonstrated that managers' sense making (for example Weick, 1987, Katz and Kahn, 1978, Perrow, 1986) draws heavily on organisational cultures and clues, even when these may both be at variance from the law, and even when the organisation itself has sponsored management training in compliance with that law. Therefore, the challenge in addressing institutional ageism goes beyond a technical understanding of the law

itself, and actually requires senior managers (many of whom have shown themselves to be reluctant, for reasons of future promotion prospects, or even culture adherence) to lead on age diversity, and to ensure that written policies are understood and actively managed, and to have the courage to challenge ageism when they encounter it personally.

Age and Workplace Practice

In the literature review, it was seen that Macnicol (2006) regarded age discrimination as potentially more complex and challenging as employment discrimination than sex, race, or disability, since it is problematic to define, quantify, and counter (P6). To address the operational needs of senior managers to work with the legislation on age discrimination (EE(A)R), the research revealed that senior managers had been brought up to date on age diversity through briefing material (92% of managers interviewed), rather than training aimed at addressing Macnicol's (2006) 'more complex and challenging' context for age discrimination. The senior managers in this cohort were intelligent, and experienced. Appendix J shows that four of the twenty six were educated to A level standard; twelve to degree and/or professional qualification standard; and ten to post graduate standard. Therefore, properly directed training should have enabled those managers to be more aware of their responsibilities for age diversity, even accounting for Macnicol's (2006) interpretation of its complexity. Similarly it has been suggested that HR Managers have tended to see age diversity as principally an issue of legal compliance (Tables 12 and 13). However, whilst they appeared aware of the technicalities of the EE(A)R, most line and HR managers in the research cohort showed low awareness of the benefits of older workers, (for example, Goldstone and Jones, 2001, and Marshall 1995; Stuart-Hamilton, 1991;Rhodes,1983; and McCann and Giles 2002) which we may include as an *individual case* for age diversity.

In the senior manager interviews, the national policy to extend working lives was not mentioned or acknowledged, leaving open the question of how else other than through behaviours and practices of senior managers will this policy be implemented in organisations? None of the twenty six managers mentioned the current shortfall in national and organisational pension funding costs (Turner, Drake, and Hills, 2006), so that there was no immediate linkage of engaging with longer working lives as one way to address organisation and national pension funding.

The literature review has explored the 'business case' for diversity, including age diversity (eg Cornelius Gooch, and Todd, 2001; Duncan and Loretto, 2004; Flynn, 2010). In this research, the needs and practice of the business were frequently cited by senior managers as justifying practices towards older workers observed or enacted in their organisations. But simply because a senior manager cites 'business reasons' or 'the needs of the business' does not mean that the business case is the same as the criteria as proposed in the literature (for example, by Cornelius Gooch, and Todd, 2001, Duncan and Loretto, 2004 Flynn, 2010). Neither does it suggest that business reasons or age diversity are interpreted or enacted in the same way, since the literature review has shown that managers interpret policy, decisions, and culture in different ways (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Weick, 1995); furthermore, there was little evidence from most of the senior managers interviewed that age diversity had become a matter of strategic sense making (Rouleau, 2005, see Table 16). Only five of the managers (two from Not for Profit D, and three from Financial Services A) showed awareness of the diversity business case and only two (from Not-For-Profit D) showed any appreciation of the social justice case (Noon , 2007).

The research has demonstrated that, with few exceptions in the research cohort, senior managers are themselves capable of ignoring evidence of ageism, ill thought through actions, careless and damaging behaviours towards their colleagues, and are capable of passively accepting or expecting ageist

behaviours affecting their own careers. For the majority, their responses to age in the workplace appeared to passively accept it as inevitable. Therefore, in the limited cases where managers may have cited 'business reasons' for age diversity in the workplace, those reasons did not relate back to the 'business case', nor national priorities on age. Instead, they tended to reflect ageist organisation culture and normative behaviours, even where age discrimination law appeared to be understood.

It is apparent, therefore, that training in age diversity for managers was, at least until 2007, a wasted opportunity in which legal compliance was highlighted, but not the benefits of older workers, as explored in the literature review. Therefore, whilst Kandola, Fullerton, and Ahmed (1995) saw the need to train managers in the benefits of diversity, this research confirms earlier research from Zanoi and Janssens (2004) that managers are very selective and instrumental in how they responded to diversity training. More recently, Coupland, Tempest and Barnatt (2008) noted that diversity would only be pursued when it could be seen as a worthwhile investment. Within the eleven organisations in the qualitative research study, only the two managers (Not-for Profit D) appeared to see age diversity as a worthwhile investment in terms of the training which they had received (seeing the individual, business, and social justice case for age diversity), and how they them deployed that training in operational practice.

6.2 Career

Career, and the Psychological Contract

The literature review considered the role of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995, and Rousseau and Greller, 1994) as an exchange agreement of what an employee believes is expected of them by the organisation, and, in turn, what they may expect of the organisation. Earlier research (Carstensen, 2003) indicated that older employees would manage negative events better than

younger colleagues, and that the psychological contract would be different in younger and older workers (Anderson and Schalk, 1998). Rousseau expected that the psychological contracts of older workers would be more stable than for younger colleagues, with older workers also seeking the ending of career to be a positive experience (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, and Charles, 1999).

The research findings showed that many of the senior managers interviewed had perceived changes in their psychological contracts, even recently, and that typically these had been experienced following a change of management styles, following the external recruitment of senior managers to whom they reported. Most typically, these changes in the psychological contract arose from a change of emphasis from the manager of the senior manager, and did not appear to have been strategically positioned by the organisation, nor did they appear to be ageist in nature. Nevertheless, they were perceived as damaging to the senior manager's psychological contract, with the expectation that careers had become fragile and brittle, and that life time careers within the organisation could be terminated at short notice, even though it was supported by early retirement or redundancy packages. Such expectations at the start of the research period in 2006 proved to be supported by the evidence, and from the original research cohort of twenty six senior managers, seven left their career organisations over the three year period of the study. However, despite senior managers' feelings reflected in the qualitative research, and the career outcomes, senior managers' values, loyalty and pride towards their organisations were only partially diminished over the three years of the study, as measured by the quantitative research (Table 32). Linked with the findings on how senior managers perceive age in the workplace, these findings suggest a passive acceptance of changes in psychological contract. Once again, they reinforce Schein's (1999) comment on the importance of an individual's affinity to organisational culture, and desire not want to be seen to be deviant in the groups that you value (P 64).

Career, and Performance Management

Performance management was an additional theme considered in the experience of older workers, and particularly focused on how senior managers felt that their roles and contributions were valued. Performance management and goal feedback are seen as providing a motivational effect on the employee (Bandura, 1989, and Bandura and Jourden, 1991). With regard to age, it has been noted that Berry and West (1993) found some goal commitment deterioration amongst older workers. West, Bagnell and Dark-Freudman (2005) found that goal progress was important for older workers, although positive goal feedback was not essential, and McNair and Flynn (2005) found that employers tended to be more lenient on performance management for older workers.

The research demonstrated some good examples of senior management performance reviews and feedback, and senior managers were realistic about what their own managers could do in terms of effective performance review. But these good examples were in the minority: of the twenty six managers in the qualitative research cohort, twenty reported that positive feedback was rare, and that reviews were more likely to focus on performance gaps. Another Area Director from the same organisation spoke of the foolishness of the belief that the more senior you are in management, the less recognition you needed. For this group of senior managers, there was little evidence to support McNair and Flynn (2005) findings of more lenient reviews for this group of older senior managers. Taken together with the perceptions of deterioration in psychological contracts, already noted, the failure to provide recognition for work well done, which many of these senior managers reported, contributed to self questioning of whether their contributions to the organisation were valued or even recognised. The research findings further identified cases where performance management was used as a prelude to terminate employment of older senior managers.

These failures in performance management appeared to be linked to the managers' grade seniority, but not to age seniority, since the effects were

especially noticeable in higher paid managers in the research cohort, irrespective of age. Even so, the failure to pay attention to good performance management reduces the manager's sense of feeling valued, and in one case led to a senior manager resigning, only to be told what a good job he had done.

These findings demonstrate that performance reviews for senior managers could contribute to managers' sense of feeling valued, but that there were considerable shortcomings in how performance review practices were undertaken for those in the senior manager research cohort.

Commitment, Values, Loyalty and Pride

The research followed up on the concepts of commitment, and separate but linked themes of organisational values, loyalty and organisational pride.

The literature on commitment was based around the themes of affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). In relation to age, Mathieu and Allen (1997) found low correlation between affective commitment and age, whilst Snape and Redman (2003) found that older workers were more likely to have high continuance commitment to remain with the same organisation. Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2008) have proposed how affective commitment may then combine with other factors to increase the intention to remain in the organisation (Table 15).

In the case of the senior managers in this research cohort, these findings were not replicated. Senior managers demonstrated high affective commitment but low continuance commitment (Tables 30, 30a, 30b, 30c, and 30 d): despite their affinity to the organisation, they did not feel they had to remain in the organisation for economic reasons. Moreover, whilst Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser's model may show how affective commitment may link to intention to remain, the three year period of the study showed that it was a poor predictor of who would remain amongst the senior managers age over 50. Instead, pre retirement

departure from the organisation happened, often at short notice, for seven of the managers in the research cohort.

The research also considered how well older workers were aligned to the values of the organisation, and their organisational loyalty and pride. First, this research analysed the national picture through the WERS 2004 questionnaire (Tables 31, 31a, 31b, 31c), then a three year perspective of senior managers' values, loyalty, and pride were analysed in Table 32. The findings demonstrated that older senior managers in the research cohort demonstrated high organisational value alignment, loyalty and pride. But despite the positive nature of quantitative results, senior managers also spoke in the research interviews of the value conflicts which they experienced within the workplace. Younger managers in the cohort showed evidence of value 'double think' (El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen, 2004) and bracketing (Lowry, 2006) as a way of managing value tensions; older managers within the research cohort showed less propensity to bend their values, although these older senior managers became the most likely to leave the organisation during the three year course of this research.

Career Challenges: Resilience, Plateau and Burnout

The research findings presented rich data on how managers faced major challenge during the span of their working careers, and so the consequences in terms of resilience, career plateau, and career burnout. Each of these is discussed further below

Contributing to the understanding of resilience

The term 'resilience' is regarded as a managerial attribute (for example, Goleman 1998), and Bennis and Thomas, (2002) discussed high challenge times for managers as 'crucibles of leadership'. Luthans (2002) defined resilience as the 'capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, and failure or even

positive events, progress and increased responsibility' (P702). Overall, however, management research literature on resilience is diffuse, and Ollier-Malaterre (2010) comments that work-life and resilience initiatives are under demonstrated both theoretically and empirically (P 42). There has been little research about how resilience actually integrates with personal and organisational value alignment, and whether resilience can be considered as the same as 'organisational survivorship'. This research has provided further insight into these questions, and whilst the research has been limited to twenty six managers, it does contribute towards a deeper understanding about the nature of managerial resilience in the work place, based on the periods of high challenge which those managers have encountered. Those challenges may arise from the nature of the work itself, but extend to include the examples shown in this research, including: learning challenge, bereavement, economic survival of the firm, career setback and career plateau, two cases of career burnout, personal relationships at home or at work, health, and conflicts between organisational and personal values (Table 33). Successfully addressing those challenges requires, and develops, resilience, the outcome of which is to enhance self belief and self confidence, and with it the capability to deal successfully with future adversity.

The research has given examples of how resilience may be under-pinned by personal support from the manager in the workplace, or outside the workplace (for example, by a partner). But resilience is not the same as survivorship, if survivorship only means staying in the organisation, and acting in a way which is contrary to personal values or beliefs, or fails to deliver organisational goals. In this way, survivorship may actually be failure. Furthermore, survivorship does not depend only on the behaviours of the individual, and the literature review has already discussed the reminder from Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008), supported by this research, that employment continuation or termination decisions in older age are ultimately made by the organisation, not by the individual.

However, the research has also shown how uncompromising resilience may also prove to be counter productive, and interpreted, at least at organisational level, as resistance to organisational goals or values. Within the twenty six managers interviewed, there were five examples of senior managers whose values differed from those of the organisation, who left during the three years of the study; a further senior manager left his organisation in March 2010, outside the 2006-2009 research period. Here, resilience may actually mean that value or goal difference leads to leaving the organisation if to remain means subordinating goals or values. So, 'double think' (El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen, 2004) or 'bracketing' (Lowry, 2006) of values may have only a short term role in helping the manager to come to terms with the newly required values or goals, or, given their roles as senior managers, making a contribution to realigning those organisational values or goals in a more acceptable way. The research gave no clear differentiation of this group of managers' resilience, based on age, gender, or organisation tenure. However, situations requiring resilience were not one-off events, and new organisational goals or challenges to values were apparent amongst older, and longer serving managers. However, younger managers in the 40-49 age group appeared more likely to compromise differences in organisational and personal values through double think or value bracketing. In contrast, weariness with value conflict, or outspoken separation of personal and organisational values resulted in older senior managers in change of job role, and early retirement in five of the eleven managers in the 50-59 age group.

Therefore, this evidence contributes to a working definition in which:

> Resilience enables a manager to adhere to an organisational or personal goal or value, whilst achieving successful outcome of goals or value adherence. Resilience allows a manager to overcome adversity, and contributes to longer term self belief, confidence, and capability.

Resilience is unlikely to be a one-off event in a manager's career, but required in different contexts and challenges

Resilience is not the same as survivorship or long term compromise of goals or values.

Career Plateau and Career Burnout

Career plateau has been defined as a career point where the individual sees little further opportunity for hierarchical career advancement (Ference, Stoner, and Warren, 1997). Smith-Ruig (2009) found that plateau could apply irrespective of age, and that continued personal development (rather than hierarchical advancement) could contribute to employee commitment and job satisfaction.

The research findings of senior managers showed (Tables 34 and 36) that seven of the twenty six managers were in the same role in the same organisation at the end of the three year research period and three were in smaller roles in the same organisation, or different organisation. On the other hand, ten of the respondents were in bigger roles (Table 34), and nine were in geographically new work locations.

Career burnout was seen in the literature review as emotional and physical weariness (Schaufeli, Taris, and Rhenen, 2008), exhaustion and depersonalisation (Freudenberger, 1974 and Burke, 1993), feelings of incompetence, cynicism (Burke, 1993), and poor job related self esteem (Maslach, 1993).

Within the research cohort, only two senior managers (Headteacher, Age 54, Male, Organisation C and Senior Manager, Age 44, Financial Services A) presented evidence of burnout in the initial three year study period. Both left their career organisations during the three-year course of the study, and both reported that they were feeling happy and contented in new roles in 2009, at the

conclusion of the research time-frame. For these two managers, the evidence was that it was possible to recover from career burnout, but it does leave open the question of how and why their career organisations could not help them towards resolving issues within the organisation, rather than needing to leave it.

These findings do little to support or deny that career plateau and career burnout occur with any differential impacts for older age senior managers, but they do underline the dynamic nature of careers in older age. In some part, this reflects the career lifespan expectations of Super 1957 and Levinson et al (1978) (Table 17), both in Maintenance and Decline stages of career. However, the changes encountered by this small group of managers demonstrated that senior managers' careers, even amongst those in the 50-59 age range, were much more dynamic than envisaged by Levinson et al (1978), and confirmed Super's (1984) later assertions that careers could not just be seen in linear terms, and could include mini cycles of renewed exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. Based on the evidence of this research of well educated older senior managers, the findings also suggest that both burnout and plateau can be seen as temporary attributes, and that meaningful career can be re-established, even amongst older managers.

Ending of Career

The final area arising from the research was to consider how older managers experienced the final years of their career. Here, the qualitative interviews were used, together with the three year perspective of careers (Section 5.6) from the cohort of twenty six senior managers. Additional research on work satisfaction was based on the WERS 2004 questionnaire (Appendix Q).

The findings have shown that at senior management levels, these results demonstrate broad consistency across age ranges, with slightly higher scores for senior managers in the 31-49 years of age in four of the seven areas (sense of achievement (Table 37a), scope to use initiative (Table 37b), and influence over

own work (Table 37c), satisfaction with the work itself (Table 37g). The remaining three values (satisfaction with training (Table 37d), satisfaction with pay (Table 37e), satisfaction with job security (Table 37f) were higher in the 51-60 age bands. These results clearly demonstrate that senior managers, including those in the older age ranges, continue to be committed to their organisations, and that overall work satisfaction indicators for older managers are comparable with those of their younger colleagues. The findings from the research cohort of senior managers further shows high organisation commitment (Table Series 30), and values, loyalty and pride (Table Series 31 and Table 32).

The research findings have underlined Crown's (1996) contention of the difficulty of predicting a person's retirement age, especially in the senior manager qualitative research cohort. It was noted that these senior managers had high affective commitment, low continuance commitment (economic dependency to remain in the organisation), and high values, loyalty and organisational pride when measured on the Meyer and Allen and WERS questionnaires. In line with the Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2008) model (Table 15), these managers may have been expected to continue in their current roles, with their current organisations, through to their normal retirement ages; however, the three year span of this research revealed that five of the senior managers in the 50-59 age band had retired early (and gone on to portfolio careers), and two in the 40-49 age band had been made redundant; by March 2010, outside the research time frame, early retirements in the 50-59 age range had increased to six. The qualitative research findings revealed that these managers had reservations about their value alignment with their career organisations. These results demonstrate the limitations of the Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2008) model, and short comings of Meyer and Allen (1997): higher affective commitment may be linked with older workers' intention to remain in the organisation, but for older senior managers actual job retention outcomes may differ and be more reliant on organisation intentions. The findings further contrast (at least in part) with Flynn's (2010) findings that UK workers staying in work

beyond age 65 tend to stay in the same role in the same organisation. Instead, the findings confirmed those of Crego, de la Hara, and Martinez-Inigo, (2008), in that, over three years, personal career decisions tended to be navigated around organisational initiative. Furthermore, the suddenness of the departures of some of these senior managers from their roles suggested that it was the organisation which decided at very short notice, and that it was time for a senior manager to retire. These unwritten protocols for leaving the career organisation (Flynn 2010) appeared to be accepted by those leaving, usually softened with an early retirement package and were not contested by the managers. Furthermore, it is apparent that for those managers in the 40-49 age band, who had the long term intention to leave their current organisations sometime in their fifties, when they would do 'something different', was, at least in part, an understanding of the tacit organisation rules for early retirement and part of the navigation around organisational initiatives, identified by Crego, de la Hara, and Martinez-Inigo, (2008). These findings are consistent with Branine and Glover's observation (1997) that the desire to retire early may be less about the desire to find a new lifestyle, and more about the wish to avoid feeling undervalued.

Underlying all the discussion about forms of career and stages of career, and despite the protection offered by the EE(A)R, it is difficult escape the conclusion that for most of the senior managers in the research cohort, their intentions to leave the organisation early, or fight to stay in the organisation for a longer period, were framed around tacit understandings of the nature of ageism in their career organisations. Therefore, at some stage in their careers, usually in the age range of 50-59, and before the default retirement age of 65, they would need to make radical adjustments to career and lifestyle as their current organisational careers were perceived as of no longer value by the organisation.

6.3 Key Contributions from this Thesis

Overall, this research has contributed to our perspectives of age in the workplace in demonstrating social construction in senior managers' perspectives of age;

senior managers' low awareness of the values of older colleagues and absence of engagement with business case or social justice case for age diversity; extending insights into institutional ageism; demonstrating the value of longitudinal research; and demonstrated that older senior managers' commitment, values, loyalty, and pride are comparable with those of their younger colleagues.

Social Construction in Senior Managers' Perspectives of Age

The research has demonstrated that senior managers are not 'age neutral' in their outlooks, and view age in heavily socially constructed terms. Not only did this apply in how they viewed others in the organisation, but most senior managers interviewed tended to accept ageism directed at themselves personally – whether in their forties or their fifties. This builds on research identifying age 50/55 as 'older' in an employee, and contrasts with the fact that the EE(A)R had been intended to prevent age discrimination. Furthermore, with extensions in working lives, prior to retirement, it leaves a further ten to fifteen years when a working manager continues to be seen, in negative terms, as 'older'.

The second area related to social construction of age is what age is considered to be 'older'. The literature review has seen a case for age 50/55 (for example Claes and Heymans, 2008; Simpson, Greller, and Stroh, 2002; OECD, 2004). However, this research, has provided evidence from some sectors (for example, media and financial services) that 35-40 plus is considered 'older'.

Senior managers' low awareness of the benefits of older workers

Managers in this research had been trained in the legal aspects of diversity and half had been trained in age discrimination. But despite this training, the capabilities of older workers explored in the literature review, their continued satisfaction with work, and their values, loyalty and pride, were not usually recognised by senior managers. Furthermore, only a minority acknowledged the

existence of the business case or social justice case. Instead, once they had understood the technicalities of age discrimination law, reversion to organisation ageist cultures became the norm.

Institutional Ageism

The thesis has developed Taylor and Walker's (1998) concept of institutional ageism well beyond referral to SPA alone: it has shown how institutional ageism may be established and sustained by senior managers failing to challenge ageism, whether in the unwritten norms of organisational culture, or as it applies to them personally.

Value of Longitudinal Research

The three year approach to the research has demonstrated the value of longitudinal research in considering age in the workplace. The three year period revealed outcomes which would not have been evidenced in one-off research. Most particularly, it has identified senior managers planning on continuing work until their sixtieth birthday, or beyond, and remaining true to their values in the meantime: but consistent with the findings of Crego, de la Hera, and Martinez-Inigo (2008), and Flynn (2010), unwritten organisation policies intervened over three years, and those managers were no longer in the same organisation. But the three year research period also delivered some hope too, as managers in their fifties who feared they would lose their jobs (and did so) nevertheless became re-employed.

Commitment, Organisational Values, Loyalty and Pride

This research has demonstrated that commitment, organisational values, loyalty and pride are comparable for older senior managers as for their younger colleagues, despite challenges to their psychological contracts as they grow older, poor performance management practices experienced, and work and personal challenges requiring resilience.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The National Picture

This thesis has been contextualised within the national picture on age. The UK population is ageing. The median age of the population of 35 in 1983, and 39 in 2008, is expected to increase to 40 by 2033. By that date, it is also expected that 23% of the population will be over age 65, compared with 15% in 1983 (Office of National Statistics 2010c). Current experience is that older people in the age range of 50-65 have a lower employment rate (71.8%), contrasted with for those aged 25 to 49 (80.1%) (Department for Work and Pensions, 2009a). In parallel with this ageing population, the future cost of retirement pensions schemes is increasing (Turner, Drake, and Hills, 2006). The EE(A)R, made age related employment discrimination in the UK unlawful, and extended the right to remain in employment until at least the age of 65, an age which is under review for possible extension or abolition (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009), and in June 2010, the new UK government announced its intention to abolish the compulsory retirement age (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010). Therefore, the legislative framework is set to provide employment protection for employees of all ages, with a particular need to retain opportunity and a fair place to work for younger and older employees.

Purcell and Clark (2004) noted that there had been little investigation of the occupational, sector, gender, or policy and practice implications of age within the workplace (P3). This study contributes to closing that gap in understanding, and has examined to what extent older senior managers were prepared for the introduction of this legislation in 2006. The aim was to look beyond whether or not they had been trained in age diversity, but to gain a deeper insight of to what extent they perceived age and ageism in the workplace, how it may influence their own management styles and approaches towards others, and how perceptions of age affected them personally in terms of career. Despite the

research having been undertaken during 2006 and 2009, a period of economic instability, the demographic, public policy, and social reasons for age diversity in the workplace remain as important as ever. Even so, this thesis has demonstrated the tensions between the social justice, national economic, business, and legal cases for employing older workers, and the increase in life expectancy and work effectiveness in older age, balanced against organisation antipathy and discrimination towards older workers.

The conclusions from this thesis are in two areas of management practice. The first is to increase the understanding, perception, and practice relating to ageism and age discrimination in the UK workplace. The second area is to develop a contemporary understanding of older senior managers' careers, and the issues which shape, assist, and obstruct their career aspirations.

7.2 Senior Managers' Understanding of Age and Age Discrimination in the Workplace

The Introduction showed the important background of senior managers' support for the effective pursuit of an equalities agenda in employment practices on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. Bond, Hollywood, and Colgan (2009) noted in research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission that 'organisations felt that it was essential to have support from managers at the most senior levels in order to pursue an equalities agenda effectively' (P39). The aim of this study has been to understand what we may learn about age in the workplace from older senior managers, a group which both has the responsibility to develop and manage age diversity, and also has a personal interest in its outcomes on their personal careers.

In their individual perceptions of age, the results are discouraging, and are far from the age neutral work environment which the EE(A)R may seek to achieve. Senior managers demonstrated highly differentiated interpretations of age in the workplace, based on negative stereotypes and social constructions of age.

There was some evidence from the qualitative research that the social construction could lead senior managers to see an organisational threshold age for 'older workers' as in the age range of 35-40 in some organisations and job types. More usually, both in private and public sector organisations, age 50 was considered to be the threshold age for defining 'older' in the workplace, confirming findings from Claes and Heymans (2008), the OECD (2004) and Simpson, Greller, and Stroh (2002). This research further showed that managers aged 40-49 expected that they would be less able to cope with the pace of work in their fifties, whilst those in their fifties negatively experienced how they were perceived in the workplace. As a result, senior managers in the 40-49 age range showed evidence of adjusting career plans for when they were in their fifties; all but two of the managers in their fifties in the research group faced major readjustment to career and life plans during the three years course of this study.

Senior managers in the qualitative research could reasonably have been expected to have been prepared and willing to identify and confront work place age discrimination. But there was little evidence of this in practice. Instead, managers took their policy and practice cues from existing organisational cultures, beliefs and behaviours. Despite their managerial roles, their sense making of age diversity was more likely to be rooted in existing, usually ageist, organisational norms and practices. This inertia is not simply about a failure of training and communication to effect policy change. Instead, it helps to understand that organisational change, even at management levels, must take full account of culture change if it is to be successfully implemented.

With regard to the role of the state and UK workplace policy and practice, the evidence that UK organisations had policies in place for the legislative changes shows mixed results. According to WERS 2004, 20% of organisations claimed to have diversity policies which included age. Few monitored those diversity policies: for example, age and promotions were monitored by only 7% of

organisations (Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix, and Oxenbridge, 2006, P 248).

Extensive training and briefing programmes were arranged to support the introduction of the EE(A)R), and all but one of the twenty six senior managers in the research cohort said that they had been briefed and/or trained in workplace discrimination, but only half had been briefed or trained on the age impacts of discrimination. The research has seen low recognition of workplace age discrimination: a lost opportunity in the senior manager training was that whilst senior managers may have been able to understand the technicalities of age discrimination, the managers in this research cohort had not been trained in some of the benefits of employing older workers as part of a mixed age workforce. This is an important omission, since Coupland, Tempest and Barnatt (2008) suggested that 'for [age] discrimination to be reduced it would need to be in a climate of perceived worthwhile investment' (P 429). Without seeing a genuine contribution from older workers, managers are less likely to be convinced of any business reasons for diversity. In turn, this devalues the 'business case' for age diversity, leaving managers to 'bracket' (Lowry, 2006) different approaches in diversity - the apparent compliance with age discrimination legislation, whilst concurrently practising, and personally experiencing, age discrimination.

The initially slow number of cases referred to Employment Tribunals (972 in 2006-07, and 5,200 in 2009-10, See Table12) may appear to support the suggestion from bodies such as the CBI's evidence to the Department of Trade and Industry (2006, P6) that most of the changes required to tackle workplace age discrimination are already in place. But other secondary research, for example, CIPD (2005) paints a very different picture, with 59 % claiming that they have seen evidence of age discrimination in employment. Therefore, the context for the research is one of legislative protection against ageism in the workplace, supported by organisational policies to prevent this happening. However, this

thesis has demonstrated how there continues to be widespread evidence of continuing age discrimination in the UK workplace, with senior managers from this research cohort both passive and impotent to confront ageism, whether for their own benefits, or that of their organisations or colleagues.

In UK workplace practice, this study contributes to the knowledge and understanding of how senior managers' attitudes acquiesce towards workplace ageism and is deeply rooted amongst the behaviours, practices and beliefs of senior managers. The research has illustrated how ageism within managerial attitudes can lead to institutional ageism within an organisation, resulting from low awareness of ageism, and failure to challenge it when it is encountered both professionally and personally: a working definition of institutional ageism has been proposed. This research further contributes to understanding tacit acceptance of the perceived inevitability of ageism, since older workers are more compliant and tolerant of discriminatory practices (Glover and Branine, 1997) and offers one explanation for the slow take up to date of Employment Tribunal claims, despite secondary evidence that age discrimination is widespread within the UK. The research may have expected to trace progress from age discrimination towards age diversity in UK workplaces. Instead, it has served to highlight the complexity of the starting point towards age diversity.

The research demonstrated scant regard for any business or social justice case for age diversity in the work place. Where 'business reasons' were cited as reflecting age issues in the workplace, these tended to be ageist justifications for selecting and promoting younger people, and did not relate to business case rationale suggested in academic literature (for example Cornelius, Gooch, and Todd (2001). Therefore the research has demonstrated that the national, social and business cases for age diversity need to be better understood by managers, and that managers should be better informed about the capabilities of all older workers, including older senior managers. Furthermore, non ageist behaviours must be made more explicit within those business cases, so that managers

continuing to work in older age may do so in a manner which does not undermine their effectiveness through age discriminatory work behaviours.

7.3 The Influence of Age on Senior Managers' Career Plans and Outcomes

The thesis has looked in depth at the work and careers of twenty six senior managers. Their career progress was tracked over a three year period (2006-2009), giving the opportunity to contrast career intentions with actual outcomes over this period.

The research has demonstrated the types of changes experienced by senior managers in their psychological contract. These include the effect of new entrants at more senior levels within the organisation, and a less tolerant attitude towards even short term performance dips. The effects of these changes in psychological contract have been to make those managers feel that their careers and continuation in their current organisation had become fragile and insecure.

Performance management practices for older senior managers were reported in the interviews as weak, with only six of the twenty six managers, feeling that their contributions were positively recognised. Managers' work contributions therefore continued in spite of a lack of performance management. However, combined with the negative changes in psychological contract, already noted, this lack of feedback reinforced feelings of career vulnerability amongst managers.

Despite changes in the psychological contract and poor performance management feedback, high work commitment continued to be evidenced, based on affective organisational commitment, but not the continuance commitment which earlier research (for example Snape and Redman, 2003) had suggested would be more likely in older workers. Therefore, senior managers appeared to be less concerned with the economic needs to continue in their current employment in their later years, and their willingness to continue to work was

more often based on organisational loyalty and affective commitment. Whilst older senior managers had higher values, loyalty, and pride than younger colleagues, the three year period of this study, and the deeper qualitative enquiry, revealed that superficially high values scores could disguise underlying value conflict, and propensity to leave the organisation, despite long service, if the opportunity arose.

The results from the UK WERS 2004 survey of senior managers' attitudes towards work shows that they remain positive in commitment, values, loyalty and pride, even as they grow older. In their sense of satisfaction from work achievement, scope for using initiative, sense of influence over work, training, pay, job security, and work satisfaction, older senior managers showed consistently high scores. However, this apparently strong base for future career and work intention was not then reflected in the qualitative research findings of future career plans when managers were in their fifties.

Little wonder, therefore, that senior managers' values and resilience were important components in them remaining effective and motivated in their work. The research has highlighted the importance which senior managers give to their personal values, and their desire to align these to their current organisational values. Younger managers (age 40-49) showed some evidence of double think/value bracketing/value compromise over the three year course of the research; in contrast, older managers (50-59) were less inclined to compromise on values, and in the course of the research, four of these managers left the organisation. In resilience, senior managers gave many examples of times during their careers where they faced and overcame personal challenge affecting their work and careers. In some cases, this was in tragic family circumstances such as bereavement following the death of partner or child, whilst at other times it reflected dealing with personal chronic ill health, sex discrimination (in women managers), or organisation changes which fundamentally affected the managers' lifestyle or values and career plateau or career burnout. A revised working

definition of management resilience was proposed in this thesis, focused on continued work performance and alignment with organisational and personal values; but organisation survivorship was not seen as synonymous with resilience, if it meant a conflict between organisation and personal values.

The research has highlighted the importance of effective age diversity management in the workplace, whether framed within a business case, social justice case, or national economic/social priority. The EE(A)R set the legal basis, and organisations claim to have established policies, which will be managed and interpreted by senior managers represented in this research. However, underneath the formality of those polices, the evidence shows widespread beliefs and behaviours from senior managers which conflict with policy and law and continue to influence senior managers' careers plans and outcomes as they grow older. Without substantial organisation action, in particular an understanding of the evidenced based research on the value of older workers, we may expect it will take considerable time to establish genuine age diversity within UK workplaces.

Attitudes towards careers in older age showed wide variation. Few of the respondents showed a strong interest in giving up work completely at their pensionable age (usually 60, not 65, in the cohort researched), but neither did most expect to stay with their current organisation through their middle to late fifties. Indeed, senior managers interviewed wanted to 'do something of value' when they were older – begging the question of whether they considered their current roles to be of no value, or why they should not still be of value when they were older. Whist these findings were for senior managers within the research cohort (aged forty to sixty), they appeared to contrast with those of Smeaton and McKay (2003) who found that most people continuing to work after the age of 65, did so in their current roles. One insight as to why this should be comes from senior managers' position as 'Professionals and Creatives, with a fairly high degree of choice, flexibility and autonomy' (Barnes, Parry and Taylor, 2004, P18).

The research has demonstrated that the senior managers within the research cohort tended to have low continuance commitment (economic requirement to continue working), balanced against a more precarious continuation with their current roles with their current employers, as both expected by most of the senior manager research cohort, and experienced by them in practice, once they reached the age of fifty.

From the research findings on ending of career, and the three year perspective of careers, the importance of a mixed research approach was underlined, as the caveats and nuances from the senior manager cohort semi structured interviews provided rich information, which in some cases contested the positive quantitative evidence, from both the WERS 2004 research, and the Meyer and Allen (1993) questionnaires. It was found that the organisations represented in this research showed little evidence in terms of management practices that attitudes and behaviours towards older workers were being adapted to make the current organisation an attractive environment in which to continue working through to retirement age. Neither did any of the senior managers speak of a shortage of management talent during their interviews, even before the economic collapse from 2008. Organisations themselves were not researched to understand the perceived benefits of the loss of older senior managers, several years before their normal retirement dates. However, a majority proportion of the senior managers in the research cohort accepted early departure prior to age 60/65 as an inevitable – even desired - outcome of the latter stages of their careers, with the result of the loss of tacit knowledge and experience of those senior managers. Consistent with the findings of Crego, de la Hara, and Martinez-Inigo, (2008), this UK sample showed that, over three years, personal career decisions tended to be navigated around organisational initiative and preference. This lack of clarity on organisational retirement criteria also supports Flynn's (2010) findings that organisational HR policy on retirement did not appear to be codified in writing, and that discretion was often left to line managers. This left managers, despite their UK employment rights, to adjust and readjust career

plans, both when they had expected to remain in the organisation, or expected not to find alternative employment. This research has not objectively considered older senior managers' work performance; however, it has demonstrated that older workers have skills, values, loyalty, and attributes which are overlooked as organisations implement early retirement plans in a manner which wastes talent, and is passively accepted by the senior managers themselves.

7.4 Policy and Practice Implications

Two important areas of outcome to consider from this thesis are for the implications to policy and practice.

At policy level, the research was initiated at a time when new national policy was being introduced, in the shape of the EE(A)R. The research was then concluded when age discrimination was being integrated within the wider legislative framework of the Equality Act, 2010. Furthermore, the UK government also announced the default retirement age of 65 (EE(A)R R 30) would be abolished during 2011 (DWP 2010), and the steady rise in Employment Tribunal cases suggests that workers are gradually taking advantage of age discrimination regulations where they perceive there has been a shortfall in organisation application. For the time being at least, the national legislative policy to address age diversity appears to be in place.

However, that clarity and purpose of policy is not applied in practice. Indeed, in 2007, the DWP highlighted that 'for the apparently positive climate [towards age discrimination] to survive an economic downturn, it may be necessary to reinforce messages about age discrimination' (P3), and that 'the process of indirect discrimination at the level of the line manager may need further attention' (P3). Furthermore, Ebrahami, Saives and Holford (2008) call for knowledge about the benefits of older workers to be encompassed in management styles of working, learning, competences, and information systems (P137). This thesis has

demonstrated that it is in the area of practice where most work needs to be done if workplace age diversity is to be achieved.

The thesis has shown the ineffectiveness of training received by senior managers within this research cohort. It was demonstrated that most had been trained in diversity in general, and either briefed or trained on age discrimination. That training has given a technical understating of workplace age discrimination, but there has been little evidence that it has been applied in practice. Instead, the senior managers in this research had attitudes towards age in the work place which were heavily immersed in social construction, and this, together with perceived organisational norms towards age in the workplace was their overwhelming frame of reference for sense making about age, and in the conduct of HRM policy.

Senior managers appeared to be unaware of the benefits of older workers, noted in the literature, and evidenced within this research too. Therefore, examples of ageist attitudes areas of HRM practice such as promotion, career moves, time for leaving the organisation were accepted, both in application seen towards colleagues, as they applied to themselves as older (over 50 year old) senior managers now, and, for those aged 40-49, as they expected them to be applied.

In addition, it has been seen that organisation performance management policy, important in principle, but problematic in implementation, can also be detrimental to older workers. On the other hand, well conducted performance reviews may offer the opportunity – so often lacking in this research – for senior managers to feel they continue to be valued, rather than having to leave to find a new lifestyle (Branine and Glover, 1997). Flynn (2010) suggested that older workers are treated more leniently in performance reviews, even though they were perceived to be lower performers. This research has shown that good performance management practice is very much the exception rather than the rule: poor, or non – existent performance reviews are unsupportive towards managers, and a wasted opportunity to help them to feel connected and valued by their employers. In other cases, this research has shown evidence that performance reviews are

used as the principle tool to terminate the careers of older senior managers, with or without previous warning; this finding directly conflicts with Flynn's (2010) 'lenient' view. To address this area, improved performance management practice must be undertaken, and requires additional skills and practices from amongst the most senior management within the organisation.

In combination, these practices have been seen to establish a work environment which is institutionally ageist, despite the organisations' declared age diversity policies, the technical understanding of age discrimination by its senior managers, and the personal stake which older senior managers themselves have for working in an age diverse environment.

With these limitations in practice in mind, organisations will need to take further steps to develop age diversity.

The first area is to audit key areas of HRM policy; to analyse the outcomes of those audits, and, in contrast to the findings from WERS 2004, where only 7% of organisations monitored outcomes and took corrective actions taken where it was appropriate to do so. To be effective, such audits will require qualitative as well as quantitative data. Quantitative data may include role change by age distribution, salary progression by age distribution, regularity of performance management reviews, and access to learning. Qualitative data will provide rich additional information to age audits, as evidenced in this research: it should be extended to include managers' views on the value of performance reviews, understanding of plans and aspirations for longer term, and how organisational practices affect those plans.

The second area of practice to address is senior managers' understanding of the advantages of older workers, and the recognition that they continue to have skills which complement organisational and team performance. Such training must also address senior managers' social construction of age in the workplace.

The third area of practice is to improve performance management practice, an issue not limited to a practice which has age diversity implications alone. More

effective performance reviews become even more important after the announcement of the abolition of the Default Retirement Age (EE(A)R R 30), where a decision by an organisation to dismiss on the grounds of capability, conduct, illegality, or some other substantial reason an older employee who wishes to remain at work will need to be fully justified as for any other worker within the terms of the Employment Rights Act, 1996, (S 98).

7.5 Future Research

This thesis has added deeper understanding to the behaviours and beliefs of senior managers towards age in the workplace, but also leaves a wide scope for future research in an area of working life which needs to change for the economic and social reasons already discussed. Whilst this research has demonstrated that senior managers have perspective of age in the workplace, the support required for them to make a difference with the promotion of an age diversity agenda in the work place (as proposed by Bond Hollywood and Coglan, 2009) remains elusive. From this research agenda, there is clearly still space for independent, unfunded research activity. However, in view of the scale and complexity issues in workplace ageism, this suggests a need for wider scale funded and collaborative research projects in four principal areas.

The first area of enquiry would be the occupational and industry sector impacts of workplace ageism The early evidence from this research is that changes in law are not, in themselves, sufficient to change deeply rooted workplace behaviours and practices. It has already been noted (Table 3, National Statistics Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2004) that age is not evenly distributed within and between UK industry sectors, raising the question of why this should be. In particular, it provides a basis for investigating the nature of institutional ageism (Taylor and Walker, 1998, but extending the scope more widely than a focus on SPA impacts alone) and the existence and causes of occupational horizontal and vertical segregation on the grounds of age in the workplace. Such research

would be about workers of all ages, including younger workers, and not framed around older workers alone. In support of the rationale for this research, 7.2% of younger (16-24 year older), and 5.3% older (age 50 to SPA) workers would like to work, but are currently inactive, compared with 4.1% of those aged 25-49 (Department for Work and Pensions, 2009, P 5).

The second area of interest for future research is gender and age, which was not considered within this research. The Equality Act Impact Assessment (2010) noted that the incidence of dual discrimination was likely to be between 7.5% and 5% of all discrimination cases (P207). In academic research, 'double jeopardy' (de Beauvoir, 1972) and intersectionality (Walby 2007, and Durbin and Conley, 2010) were excluded from the scope of this research. This leaves an important area for future research in age and gender in combination, which is to consider in more detail the concept of double jeopardy and intersectionality of gender and age in senior managers, and to explore the extent to which these are evidenced in a larger group of senior managers.

The third area of investigation prompted by this study is of how attitudes such as value, work commitment, and work satisfaction may vary across all age ranges. This research did not include research on younger managers, aged 16-39, although there may be evidence (for example, Rhodes, 1983; Davis, Pawlowski, and Houston, 2006; Abrams, Eller, and Bryant, 2006; and CIPD, 2008) that generational differences (rather than life stage) influence work behaviours. Equally importantly, this research has focused on age 50 plus as being older, but those in the 60 plus age range are not represented in the qualitative research cohort. Here, the review of the UK national default retirement age highlights interest in the nature of the work experience, especially those aged 60 plus in older age (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009).

Finally, it would be interesting to continue this research on a longitudinal basis to observe when, how, and why attitudes towards age finally change. In addition to

the many social dimensions for understanding this change as it affects age discrimination, it would also help to understand other areas of where and how other areas of discrimination, such as sex, disability, and ethnicity may be seen as responding only slowly to workplace changes, despite the existence of UK laws to protect workers in those areas .

7.6 Looking Forward

This thesis has demonstrated how senior managers can have a technical understanding of age discrimination and the principles of the EE(A)R. But that technical understanding was heavily overladen in this research with negative stereotypes, ignorance of the positive qualities of older workers, and multiple social constructions of age, reflecting and sustaining their organisations' ageist cultures, and often influencing and restricting their own career plans. To develop leadership towards genuine age diversity within the workplace, senior managers will need to break these stereotypes and social constructions – as they do so, they may also develop their own self belief in the continued value which they can provide, as they, too, grow older.

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Appendices **Page**

Appendix A

Summary of the requirements of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

With effect from 1 October, 2006, the following employment practices are unlawful in the UK:

- Discriminate directly against anyone – that is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their age (S((1)(a)) – unless objectively justified, including exemptions for positive action in relation to training (S29)
- Discriminate indirectly(S((1)(b)) against anyone – that is, to apply a criterion, provision, or practice which disadvantages people of a particular age unless it can be objectively justified
- Subject someone to harassment (S6). Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim
- Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a compliant or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of age (S4)
- Discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended(S24)

Employers could be responsible for the acts of employees who discriminate on the grounds of age. This makes it important to train staff about the regulations

Upper age limits on unfair dismissal and redundancy removed

National default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified (Regulation 30).

Employees' right to request to work beyond 65 or any other retirement age set by the company. The employer has a duty to consider such requests (Regulation 47)

There are limited circumstances when discrimination may be lawful for genuine occupational requirements, objective justifications, exceptions, and exemptions(S8)

Source: ACAS (2006) Age and the Workplace Putting the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations into Practice P4-5; and The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Appendix B

Bio Data and Initial Senior Manager Questionnaire

Please complete this form as accurately and honestly as possible, and e mail it back to john_neugebauer@msn.com.
The details will remain confidential, and any information used will not be used in such a way that individual respondents may be identified

Thank you for your time and contribution to this study, John Neugebauer

Interviewee Code (As shown in your covering letter)

Diversity monitor
Gender
Ethnicity
Do you consider yourself to be disabled?
Age as at August 31, 2006
Your Current Employment
Years with current Employer
Normal Retirement Age with current Employer
Current Job
Average weekly working hours
Current Pension arrangement (Please tick)
Final Salary Scheme
Money Purchase Scheme
Other Retirement arrangements (eg Property)
None
Don't know
Overall, how financially well provided for would you be if you:
Retired this year?
Retired at Normal Retirement date?
Retired at a date later then your Normal Retirement Date?
Value of Current Benefit Package (salary, plus benefits such as car, employer pensions contribution, bonus, profit share, etc) (Please Tick)
Less than £40,000
£40,000-£70,000
£71,000- £100,000
£101,000-£150,000
Greater than £150,000

Have you ever been made redundant from a company? (Please tick)
No Yes, Voluntary Yes, Compulsory
Family (Please tick, as applicable)
Dependent spouse/partner
Dependent children
Dependent senior relatives
Current Health (Please tick)
Good
Generally good, with or without time off for sickness
Fair, with chronic sickness problem, which may or may not require time off

Poor, with chronic health problem and time off

Education (Please Tick all those which apply)

Post Graduate
Professional
First Degree
A level
GCE/GCSE
Other(Please specify)

Your current industry sector. Which of the following most closely describes your industry?

	Please tick
Agriculture and fishing	
Manufacturing	
Construction	
Distribution, hotels & restaurants	
Transport & communication	
Banking, finance & insurance etc	
Public admin, education & health	
Self-Employed	
Not-for-profit sector	
Other	

If you had the chance to do so now, what would you realistically wish to do? (Please Tick)

Carry on as you are now; retire at normal retirement age
Retire now, and relax
Retire, and get a part time job,
Take a sabbatical
Retire and take a portfolio career
Don't know/Haven't thought about it
Don't Know/Have thought about it

Are you involved with:

Coaching other staff Mentoring other staff

What are the three things you most enjoy about your work?

What are the three things you least like about your work?

Is there anything else you would like to say in connection with this study?

Appendix C

Research Interview Format

The interviews will be undertaken on a semi structured basis. Whilst the notes below give an overall framework for interview content, the content may be adapted as new and relevant lines of enquiry are raised during the discussion. Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed. They will be compared with questionnaire responses and psychometrics results, so as to check understanding, and identify themes and issues. The pilot questionnaire may also be adapted if it becomes apparent that it contained ambiguous responses, and lacked sufficient detail.

Questions to be Asked

Can we start by you giving me an overview of your career to date?

What would describe as the 3 highlights during this time, and why?

And on the other hand, what would the three darkest moments, and why?

What gives you most job satisfaction now, and why?

How does this compare with your job satisfaction, say, 10 years ago?

How well are you aligned with your organisation's goals and values?

Has this change over the previous 5 years? Why (Why not?)

Do you feel you have suffered from, or benefited from, age discrimination? What form did this take?

Have you observed colleagues suffer from/benefit from age discrimination?

Have you personally been subjected to discrimination? (Details)

How is your personal work contribution recognised?

What are the most frustrating aspects of your current role?

Looking back, say, 5 years ago, would you have had the opportunity to retire before normal retirement age?

Do you have the same opportunity now?

If so, why. If not, why not??

How do you feel about this?

What are your plans for the next 15 years? Why?

Appendix D

Work Commitment Questionnaire

Respondent:
Date:

Please tick how you most closely feel to the statements below: (1) Strongly disagree (4) Agree (7) Strongly agree

Affective Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q1 AC 1 I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation							
Q2 AC 2 I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it							
Q3 AC 3 I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own							
Q4 AC 4(R) I think I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one							
Q5 AC 5(R) I do not feel like 'part of the family' in this organisation							
Q6 AC 6 I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation							
Q7 AC7 This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me							
Q8 AC 8 (R) I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation							
Continuance Commitment							
Q9 CC 1 (R) I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job now, without having another job lined up							
Q10 CC 2 It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to							
Q11 CC 3 Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation right now							
Q12 CC 4 (R) It wouldn't be costly to leave my organisation in the near future							
Q 13 CC 5 Right now, staying with my organisation is as much a matter of necessity as of desire							
Q14 CC 6 I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation							
Q15 CC 7 One of the few negative consequences about leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives							
Q16 CC 8 One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that leaving would require would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here							
Q17 CC 9 If I had not already put so much into this organisation, I might consider working elsewhere							
Normative Commitment							
Q18 NC 1(R) I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer							
Q19 NC 2 Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave my organisation right now							
Q20 NC 3 I would feel guilty if I left my organisation right now							
Q21 NC 4 This organisation deserves my loyalty							
Q22 NC 5 I would not leave this organisation now because of my sense of obligation to the people in it							
Q23 NC 6 I owe a great deal to the people in this organisation							

Source Meyer and Allen (1993)

Appendix E

Senior Managers' Supplementary Question Form, Summer 2007

Dear

I hope that you are keeping well!

Last year, you kindly participated in research which I am doing at Bristol University on how senior managers respond to age in the workplace.

The research and findings are progressing well, but I wondered if I could ask a small number of supplementary questions.

These are on the form below. As with the previous research responses you gave me, your answers will be treated in strict confidence, and nothing will be released which could enable your identity to be revealed or deduced.

Thank you very much for your continued support

With best wishes

John Neugebauer

1 WERS Your Views on Working Here

Please tick the box which most strongly applied in the summer of 2006

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree, not Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
I share many of the values of my organisation						
I feel loyal to my organisation						
I am proud to tell people who I work for						

2 Briefing/Training in Diversity

Have you been formally briefed on diversity?

Have you been trained in diversity management?

Have you been formally briefed on the age impacts of diversity management?

Have you been trained in the age impacts of diversity management?

Your Career since 2006

Has your role changed since 2006?

(If so, please give details)

Thank you again for your time and assistance
John Neugebauer

Appendix F

Senior Managers Supplementary Questions Summer 2009

In 2006, you kindly participated in research about how senior managers respond to age in the workplace. At the time you also indicated that you would be willing to participate in follow up research at a later date.

The research is now reaching a conclusion, and I would be very grateful if you could please spend a couple of minutes to complete and return the attached questionnaire.

This is being undertaken as part of a research project I am undertaking at Bristol University into older senior managers. Your answers will be maintained in strict confidence, and no individual will be identifiable by third parties in the event that research findings are published

When you have completed them, please e mail the document to John_neugebauer@msn.com.

Thank you for your time

John Neugebauer

1. **What Is your age as at 1 August 2009?**

2. **How has your Career changed since the summer of 2006? Please tick the box which most accurately applies**

	Most Applicable
Have now retired from career employment	
Not currently employed	
Now have portfolio career (different appointments)	
Same organisation, bigger role	
Same organisation, same role	
Same organisation, same role, new location	
Same organisation, smaller role	
Different organisation, bigger role	
Different organisation, similar role	
Different organisation, new location	
Different organisation, smaller role	

3. Your Views on longer term retirement. Please tick one box which most accurately reflects your plans now

	Most Applicable
Have now retired from career employment	
Now have portfolio career (different appointments)	
Plan to retire before age 60	
Plan to retire 60-65	
Plan to retire sometime after age 65	
No plans/haven't considered	

4 Your Views on Working in Your Current Organisation. Please tick the box which most accurately applies now

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I share many of the shared values of my organisation						
Feel loyal to my organisation						
Proud to tell people who I work for						

5.Permission to use data

Please confirm your permission to store, use, and analyse date provided that individual details remain confidential and anonymous (please tick)

Agree	
Do not agree	

Please return by e mail to John_neugebauer@msn.com

Thank you again for your time and assistance, John Neugebauer

Appendix G

Letter to Senior Managers Confirming Interview Protocols

Dear xxxx

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my forthcoming research into longer working lives for senior managers.

I am writing to confirm the arrangements for how I propose to take the research forward, and the protocols for ensuring that your responses will be retained on a confidential basis.

Your interviewee code is **xxx**

The background to the research is how senior managers respond to longer working lives, given the changes in retirement expectations as a result of later official retirement ages, a reduction in the availability of early retirement schemes, and reduced returns from some pension plans.

The research is based on:

- An initial research questionnaire,
- In depth interviews,
- Research questionnaire on Organisational Commitment
- A possible follow up study in 3 years time to see what has happened in the interim.

As you will understand, the research will be of little value unless responses are candid and comprehensive. I would therefore like to reassure you that:

- information which you supply will not be disclosed to any party in a manner that could identify individuals
- data will be stored, and later disposed of, securely, and
- information may be shared with assistants who will help with data analysis, but those assistants will also be covered by the same confidentiality clause. In addition, they will have no names, and only have data access via your interviewee code.

The research itself will gather biographical detail about you, such as age, job, salary range, length of service, and family circumstances. You will also be asked about attitudes. All this investigation is likely to be intrusive, and this is why anonymity will be maintained throughout the process.

When you have completed the survey, please return it to me by e mail. I would also now like to arrange interview dates, and should be grateful if you would let

me have a preferred time and place (or by phone if preferred), when I may interview you during the following dates:

4th to 8th July
17th to 21 July
31st July to 4 August

The interview itself will last no more than one hour. In order to assist with later analysis, I would like to record our discussion, so that it may be later transcribed. However, in order to protect anonymity, the same confidentiality guarantees will apply, as for completion and future use of the questionnaire.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this research.

Yours sincerely, John Neugebauer

Appendix H

WERS 2004 Questionnaire: extract of Questions used
Source: The Workplace Employment Relations Survey, 2004

WERS (2004) Questions **Your Views on Working Here** (Ranked on 5 point scale, Very satisfied; Satisfied; Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied; Dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied **A8 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your job?**
The sense of achievement you get from your work
The scope for using your own intiative
The amount of influence you have over your job
The training you receive
The amount of pay you receive
Your job security
The work itself

WERS (2004) Questions **Your Views on Working Here** (Ranked on 5 point scale, Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, with sixth option of Don't Know) **C1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**
I share many of the values of my organisation
I feel loyal to my organisation
I am proud to tell people who I work for

Appendix I

Method	Key Advantage(s)	Key Disadvantage(s)	Appropriate Use in Studies of Managers	Used in this older senior manager research?
Secondary Sources	Convenient; Draws on others' analysis	Data may not be available or inappropriate, or incomplete	Inaccessible managers	WERS 2004
Questionnaire and interview	Convenient	Data of questionable reliability	Perceptions of job	Extensively used; validity developed by using mixed research methods and status as participant observer
Critical Incidence and sequence of episodes	Allows for intense probing	Parts of job not covered by data	Some perceptions of job in depth	Critical incidents questions included in semi structured interview format
Diary	Efficient	Little help to understand new phenomena; some problems with interpretation; reliability	Large sample of differing jobs	No
Activity sampling	Efficient; recording by researcher	Little help to understand new phenomena; Non-continuous, so interpretation difficult	Observational aspects of different jobs in one location	No
Unstructured observation	Enables researcher understand new dimensions, to probe	Non-systematic and inefficient	Most complex, least understood aspects of role	No, but able to draw on personal experience as a senior manager
Structured observation	Enables researcher understand new dimensions, to probe, to be systematic	Inefficient, and uses a lot of researcher time	Content and characteristics of small sample of jobs	No

Mintzberg's Seven Methods to Study Managerial Work
Source: Based on Gill and Johnson (1991) P148

Appendix J

Table to Show Profile of Older Senior Managers

Role Title	Gender	Age (as at summer 2006)	Education Level	Salary band summer 2006	Organis-ation	Sector
Director	Female	46	A level	£40-70,000	F	Manufacture
Senior HR Manager	Female	45	Professional	£40-70,000	B	Manufacture
Senior Manager	Female	48	Post Graduate	£40-70,000	A	Financial Services
Area Director	Male	54	Professional	£101-150,00	A	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Male	42	Professional	£101-150,00	A	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Female	44	Post Graduate	£71,000-£100,000	C	Public Education
Chief Executive	Male	54	Post Graduate	£101-150,000	D	Not for Profit
Senior Manager	Male	55	Professional	£101-150,000	E	Manufacture
Senior Manager	Female	44	A Level	£40-70,000	A	Financial Services
School Head	Male	55	Post Graduate	£40-70,000	C	Public Education
Area Director	Male	48	Professional	£101-150,00	A	Financial Services
School Head	Male	54	Post Graduate	£40-70,000	C	Public Education
Business Director	Male	47	Post Graduate	>£150,000	A	Financial Services
Senior Director	Male	59	Graduate Professional	>£150,000	A	Financial Services
Senior HRM	Male	52	Graduate	£101-150,00	A	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Female	48	Post Graduate	£40-70,000	L	Financial Services
Director Own Company	Female	44	Graduate Professional	£40-70,000	G	Own Company
Senior HRM	Female	40	Graduate	£40-70,000	A	Financial Services
Head of HR	Female	49	Post Graduate	£40-70,000	D	Not for Profit
Senior Manager	Male	55	Post Graduate	£71,000-£100,000	K	Media/ Public Sector
Senior Manager	Male	44	A level	£71,000-£100,000	A	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Male	40	Post Graduate	£71,000-£100,000	J	Public Sector
Senior	Female	41	Graduate	£40-	A	Financial

Manager			Professional	70,000		Services
Senior Manager	Male	54	Professional	£101-150,00	A	Financial Services
Business Director	Male	46	A level	£101-150,00	A	Financial Services
Commercial Director	Male	54	Graduate Professional	£71,000-£100,000	H	Manufacture

Table to Show Profile of Older Senior Managers
N=26

Appendix K

Table to show CIPD Frequently Asked Questions on Age

What legislation provides protection from discrimination on the grounds of age?

Where can I find a summary of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006?

What are the forms of discrimination and who does the age discrimination legislation cover?

How can an employer objectively justify age discrimination?

What should employers do to comply with the age discrimination legislation?

Is there caselaw guidance on the amount of compensation an employer will have to pay an employee who wins an age discrimination claim?

How are statutory redundancy payments affected by age discrimination legislation?

How are employers own enhanced redundancy payments affected by the age discrimination legislation?

How does an employer know if their benefits which are based on length of service could be discriminatory on grounds of age?

What age should employers put as a retirement age in their terms and conditions if they decide to use one at all and hasn't the Government's position on this been challenged?

Can employers exclude older workers from benefits such as long-term disability insurance, permanent health schemes or life assurance cover?

Does any retirement age adopted by an employer in their standard terms and conditions of employment have to be the same for men and women?

Can an employee over the age of 65 who is dismissed claim unfair dismissal?

Which statutory procedures apply to retirement dismissals?

If an employer allows an employee to remain beyond the contractual retirement age can the employee insist upon reduced working hours?

What should employers do to deal with existing older employees including those who are already over 65 years of age?

Can an employer allow an employee to work beyond a specified retirement date if there is one?

If an employer agrees for an employee to work beyond the contractual retirement age to a set date does the employer then have to follow the retirement process again?

Can an employer dismiss an employee for poor performance if the employer regrets having allowed the employee to work beyond a specified retirement date?

Can an employer require all employees to undergo a medical examination before allowing them to work beyond 65?

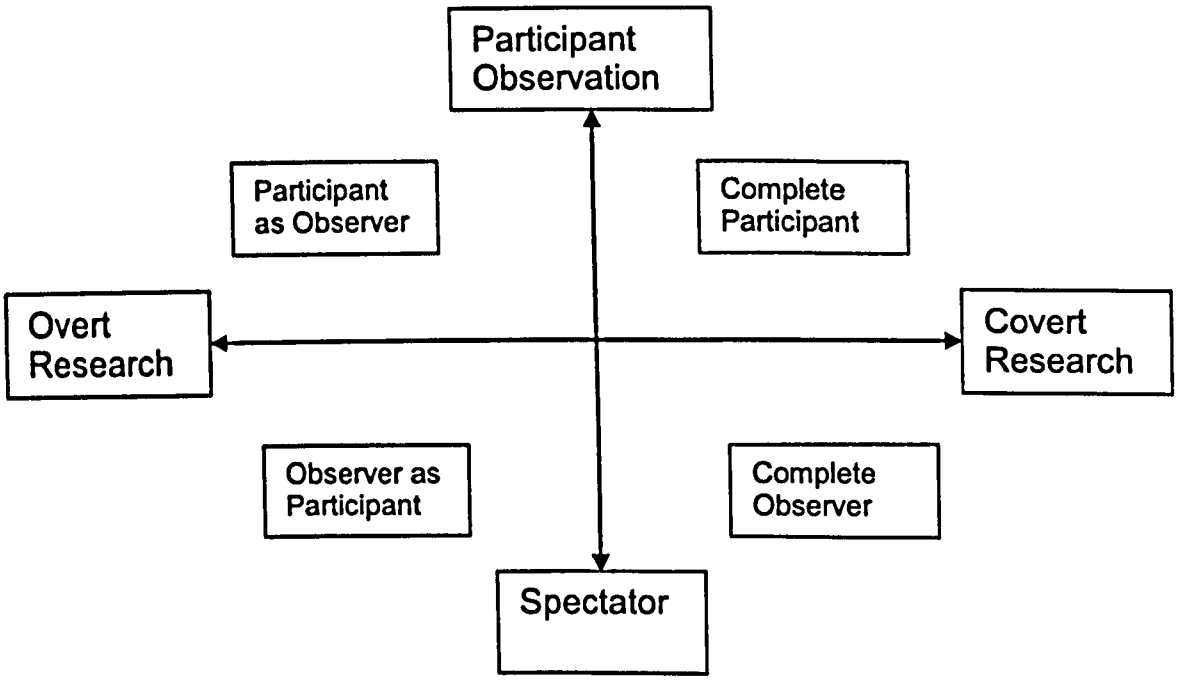
If an employer allows employees to remain beyond the contractual retirement age, can they offer a fixed-term contract and reduce the benefits package?

Are there any future developments expected in the area of age discrimination?

Source CIPD(a),
http://www.cipd.co.uk/EmploymentLaw/FAQ/_Agediscrim/Agediscrim.htm?IsSrchRes=1,
Taken from the web 6 August 2009

Appendix L

Taxonomy of Field Roles



Source Adapted from Gill and Johnson (1991) P 112; and Gold 1958, Junker, 1960

Appendix M
Questions for reflection at the conclusion of social research analysis, based on Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong P126-127(2000)

Connection of the voices and stories of individuals back to the set of historical, structural, and economic relations in which they are situated

Deployment of multiple methods of analysis so that very different kinds of analysis can be constructed

Description of the mundane, to reveal the day to day detail, as well as the exotic or violent

Review research material with some of the respondents and

Theorise the words of informants

Consider how these data could be used for social policies which may be progressive, conservative, and repressive

Interpretations and where have I backed into the passive voice and decoupled my responsibility for my interpretations

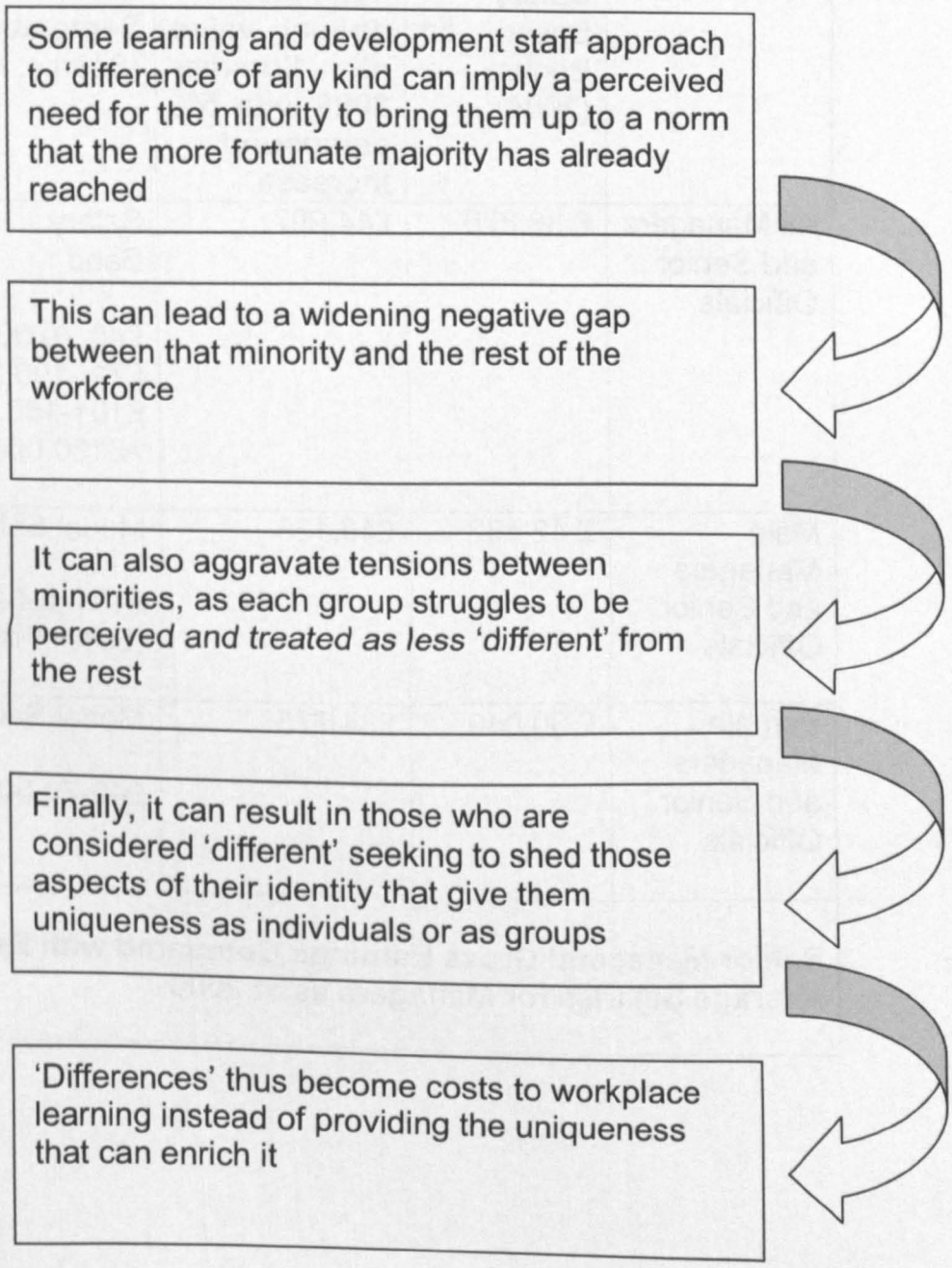
Fear of who may see the research. Who am I afraid will see these analyses? Who is rendered vulnerable/responsible or exposed by these analyses? Am I willing to show him/her/them the text before publication? If not why not? Could I publish his/her/their comments as an epilogue? What's the fear?

Aspirations to present the research findings. What dreams am I having about the material presented?

Commonsense, but not research? The extent to which my analysis presented an alternative to the 'commonsense' or dominant discourse, and consideration of the challenges which very different audiences might pose.

Appendix N

The Downward Spiral of 'Difference' in Workplace Learning
(Harrison, 2005, P182)



Appendix O

Senior Managers' Gross Earnings Compared with Estimated National Average Salaries for Managers as at 2006

Category	**Column 1. Annual Salary** Based on Begum (2004)	**Column 2. Adjusted estimated annual value at Summer 2006 with 5% compound Increase**	**Column 3. Senior Managers' Salaries Band Distribution as at September 2006** (Source: Author)
All Managers and Senior Officials	£ 38,870	£44,997	Salary Band / Number in Cohort £40-70,000 — 12 £71 -100,000 — 5 £101-150,000 — 6 >£150,000 — 2
Male Managers and Senior Officials	£ 42,432	£49,120	Modal Salary Band £101-150,000 (50% of male respondents)
Female Managers and Senior Officials	£ 30,040	£34,775	Modal Salary Band £40-70,000
Senior Managers' Gross Earnings Compared with Estimated National Average Salaries for Managers as at 2006			

Appendix P

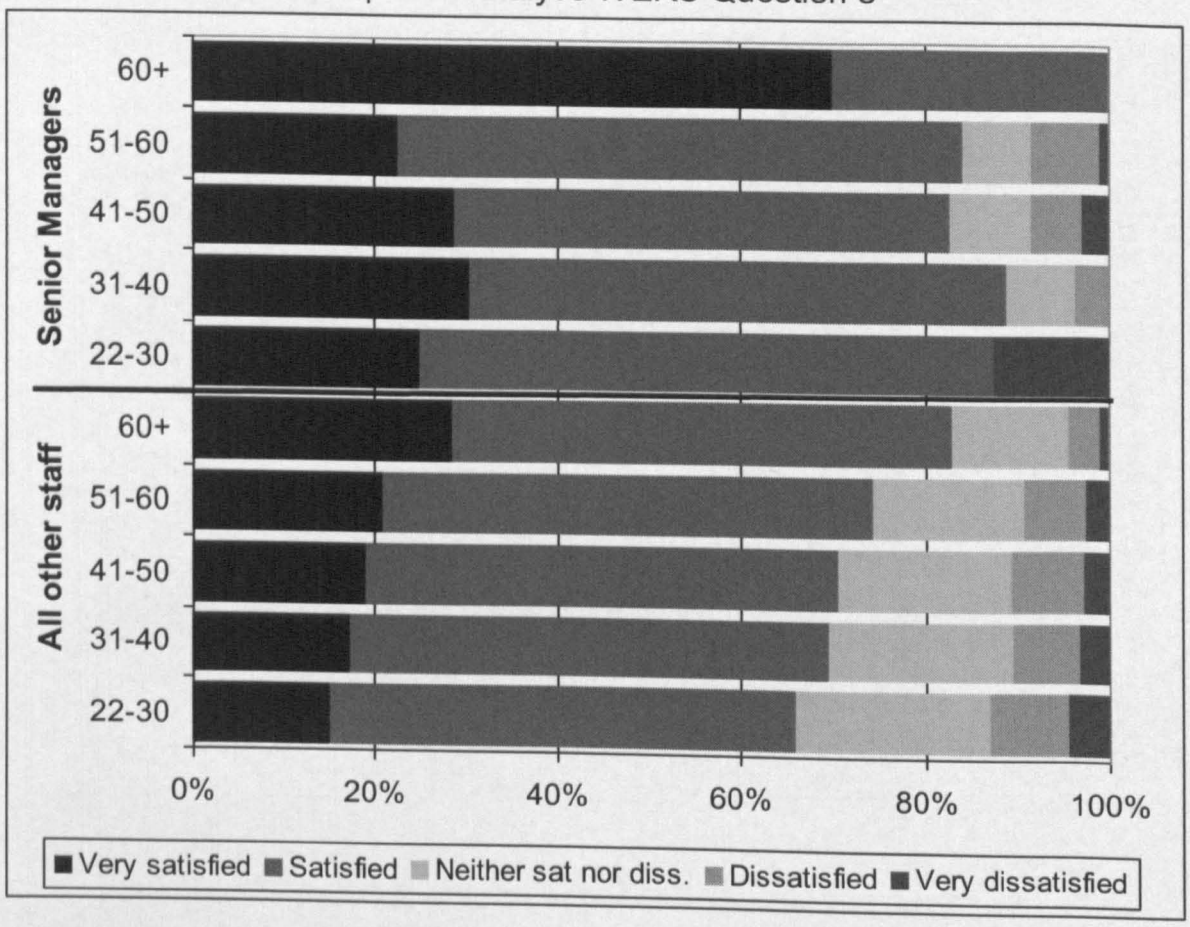
Table to Show Profile of Older Senior Managers after Three Years N=26

Role Title As at summer 2006	Gender	Age (as at summer 2009)	Career Change in 3 years? 2009 Outcome	Pension Scheme	Retirement Plans Changed? Current Retirement plan (2009)	Employment Sector 2006
Director	Female	49	Bigger role Same organisation	Final Salary	No No plans	Manufacture
Senior HR Manager	Female	48	Bigger role Same organisation	Final Salary	No 60	Manufacture
Senior Manager	Female	51	Promoted Same organisation	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Area Director	Male	58	Retired earlier than expected	Final Salary	Yes Retired	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Male	45	Same role Same Organisation New Location	Final Salary	Yes Pre 60	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Female	47	Bigger role Same Organisation	Final Salary	No 60-65	Public Education
Chief Executive	Male	57	Same role Same Organisation	Money Purchase	No 60-65	Not for Profit
Senior Manager	Male	58	Same role Same Organisation	Final Salary	No 60-65	Manufacture
Senior Manager	Female	47	Portfolio Multiple Organisations	No (Previous Yes)	No Pre 60	Financial Services
School Head	Male	58	Different role Different Organisation	Final Salary	No 60	Public Education
Area Director	Male	51	Promoted Same organisation	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
School Head	Male	57	Lesser role Same	Final Salary	No Post 60	Public Education

			organisation			
Business Director	Male	50	Same role Same Organisation New Location	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Senior Director	Male	62	Portfolio Multiple Organisations	Final Salary	Now Portfolio Career	Financial Services
Senior HRM	Male	55	Retired (Dec 2009)	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Female	51	Promoted Same organisation	Final Salary	No 60-65	Financial Services
Director Own Company	Female	47	Same role New Location	None arranged	Not considered	Own Company
Senior HRM	Female	43		Final Salary	No 60-65	Financial Services
Head of HR	Female	52	Promoted Same organisation	Money Purchase	No Plans	Not for Profit
Senior Manager	Male	58	Lesser role Same organisation New Location	Final Salary	No 60-65	Media/ Public Sector
Senior Manager	Male	47	Promoted Same organisation New Location	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Male	43	Same role	Final Salary	No 60-65	Public Sector
Senior Manager	Female	44	Bigger role Different organisation	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Senior Manager	Male	57	VER Smaller role Different Organisations	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Business Director	Male	49	Promoted Same organisation New Location	Final Salary	No Pre 60	Financial Services
Commercial Director	Male	57	Redundant Lower paid role New Location	Money Purchase	No Post 65	Manufacture

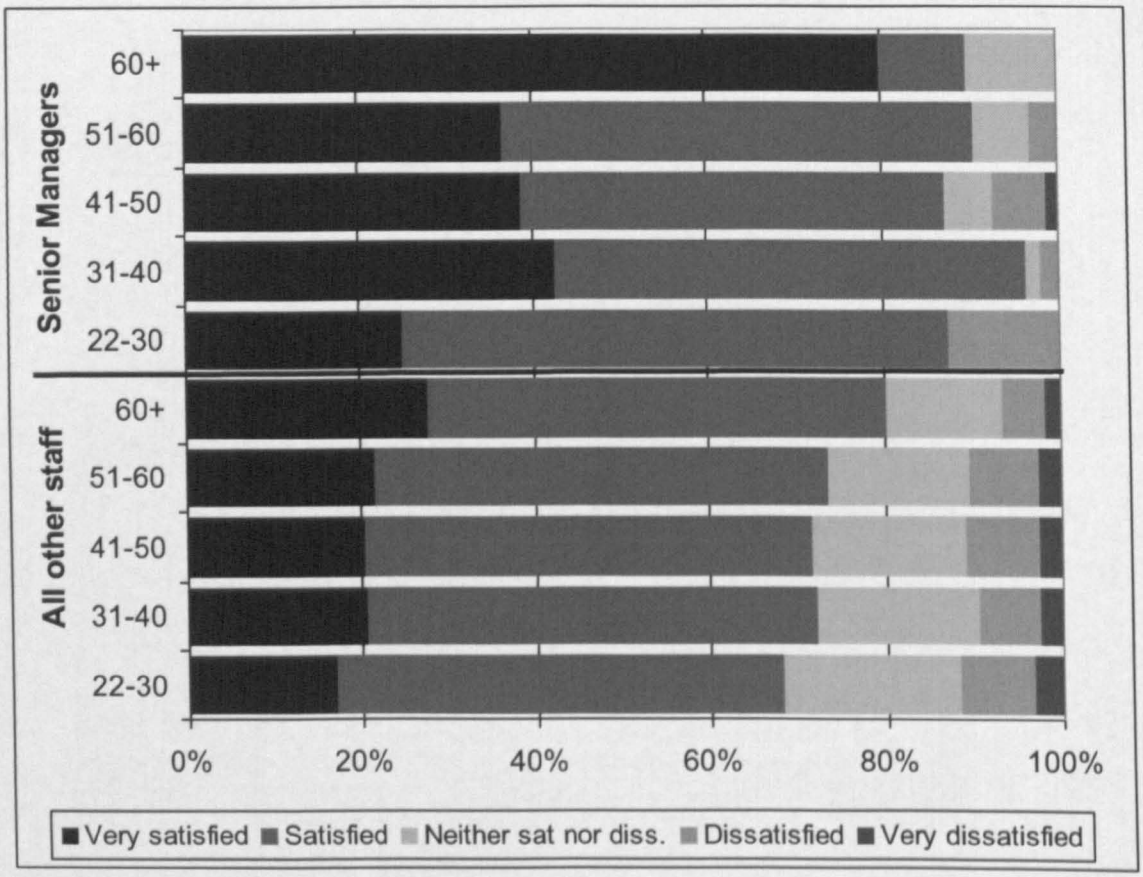
Appendix Q

Table Series 37 and Graphs to Analyse WERS Question 8



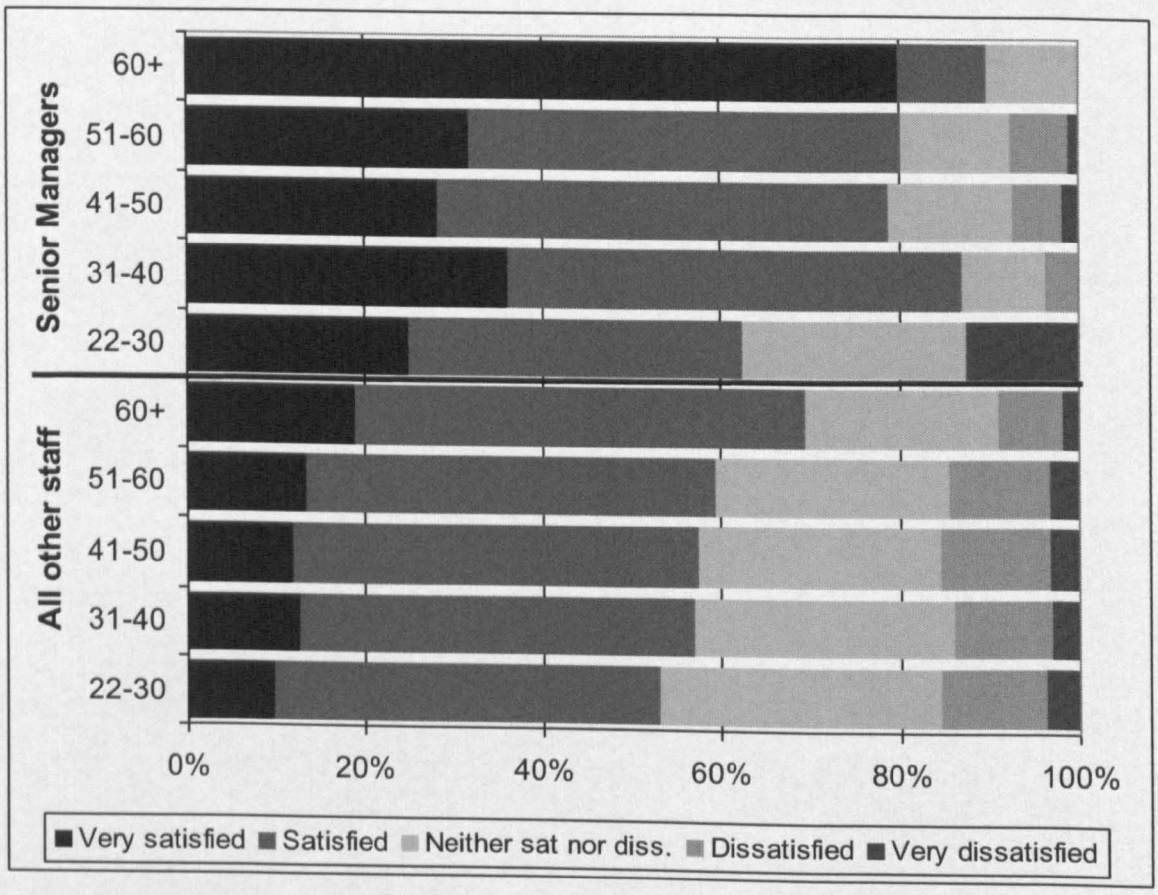
	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	15.1%	51.0%	21.0%	8.5%	4.4%
	31-40	17.2%	52.4%	20.1%	7.3%	3.0%
	41-50	19.0%	51.5%	19.0%	7.8%	2.7%
	51-60	20.9%	53.5%	16.5%	6.8%	2.3%
	60+	28.5%	54.6%	12.5%	3.5%	.9%
Senior Managers	22-30	25.0%	62.5%	.0%	.0%	12.5%
	31-40	30.6%	58.3%	7.4%	3.7%	.0%
	41-50	28.9%	53.9%	8.9%	5.6%	2.8%
	51-60	22.4%	61.7%	7.5%	7.5%	.9%
	60+	70.0%	30.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37a to Show Sense of Achievement You Get from Your Current Work
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N= 22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8a



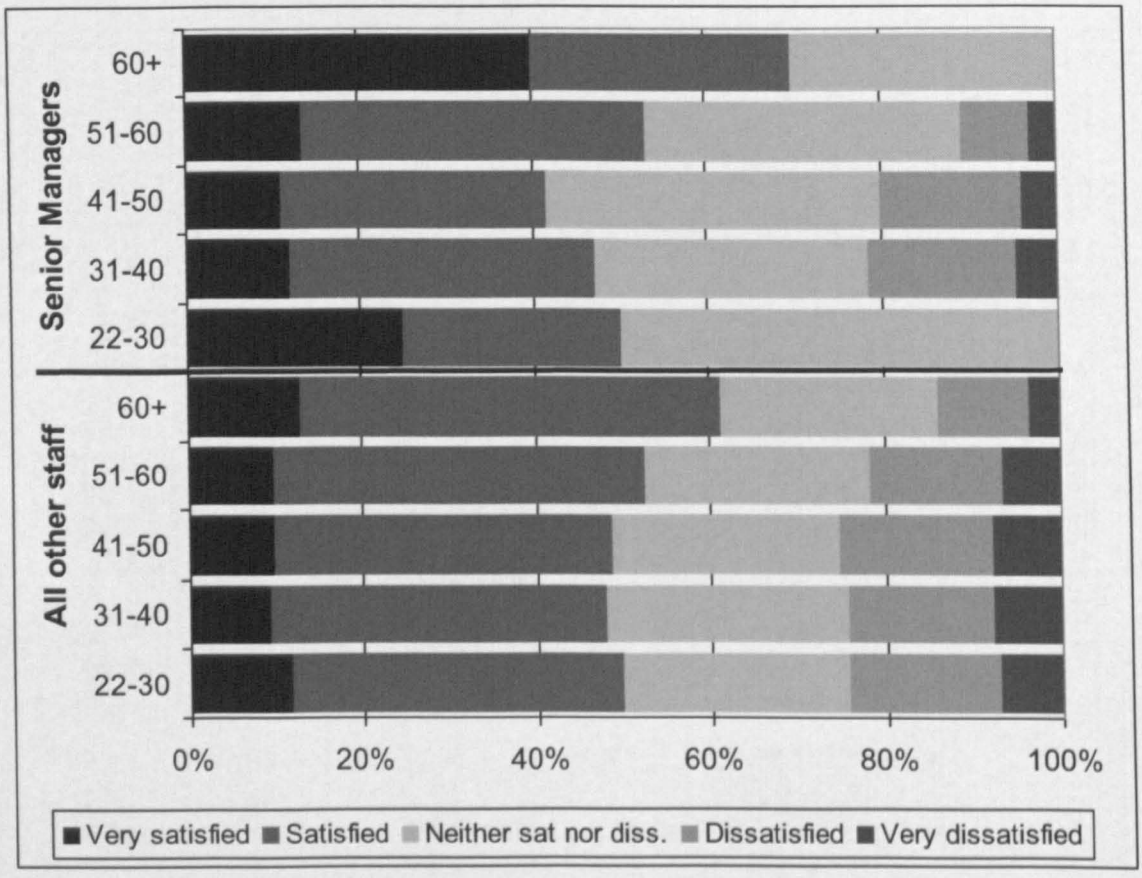
	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	17.1%	51.1%	20.2%	8.3%	3.2%
	31-40	20.6%	51.7%	18.3%	7.0%	2.4%
	41-50	20.3%	51.4%	17.5%	8.3%	2.5%
	51-60	21.5%	52.1%	16.2%	8.0%	2.3%
	60+	27.7%	52.5%	13.3%	4.9%	1.6%
Senior Managers	22-30	25.0%	62.5%	.0%	12.5%	.0%
	31-40	42.6%	53.7%	1.9%	1.9%	.0%
	41-50	38.9%	48.3%	5.6%	6.1%	1.1%
	51-60	36.8%	53.8%	6.6%	2.8%	.0%
	60+	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37 b to Show Scope for Using Your Own Initiative
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N=22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8b



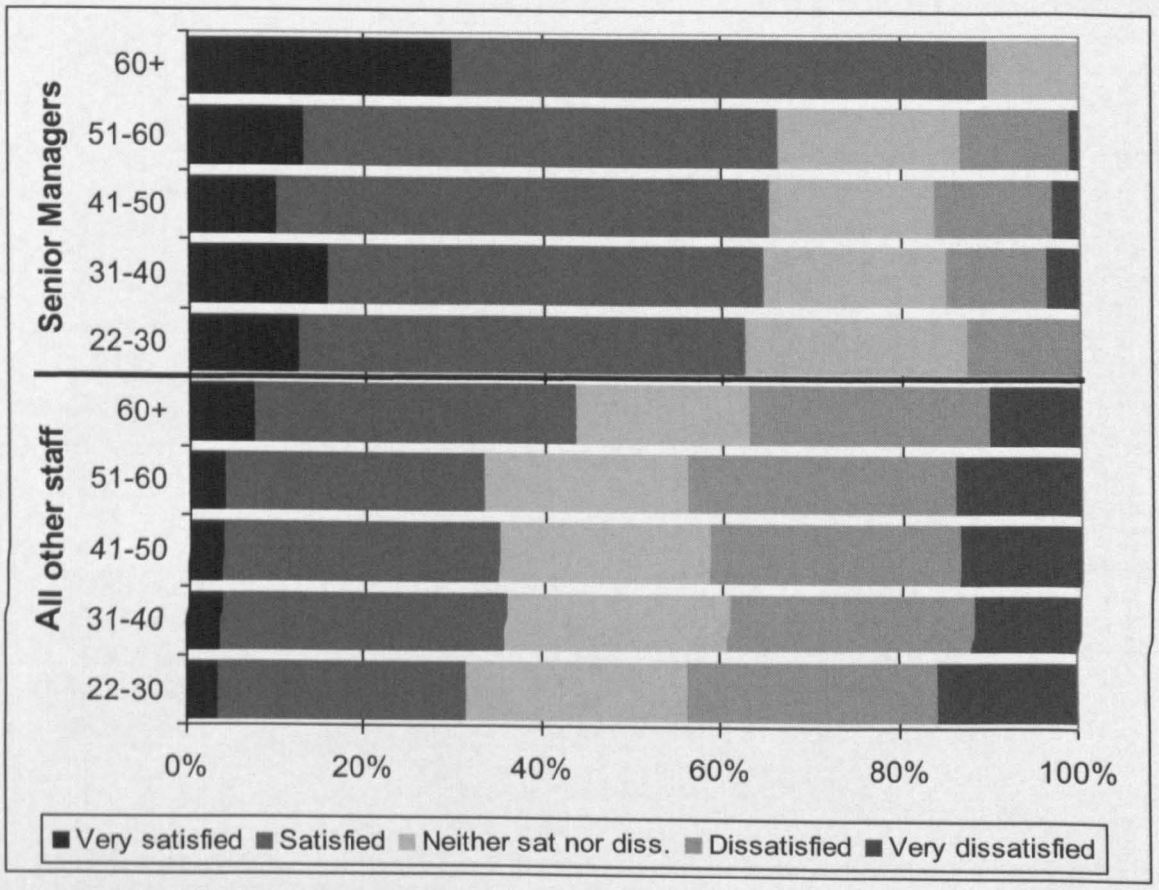
	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	9.9%	43.4%	31.2%	11.9%	3.5%
	31-40	12.7%	44.4%	29.0%	11.0%	2.9%
	41-50	12.0%	45.5%	27.1%	12.2%	3.2%
	51-60	13.4%	46.1%	26.2%	11.3%	3.1%
	60+	18.8%	50.8%	21.6%	7.2%	1.6%
Senior Managers	22-30	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	.0%	12.5%
	31-40	36.1%	50.9%	9.3%	3.7%	.0%
	41-50	28.3%	50.6%	13.9%	5.6%	1.7%
	51-60	31.8%	48.6%	12.1%	6.5%	.9%
	60+	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37 c to Show Satisfaction for Influence Over Own Work
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N=22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8c



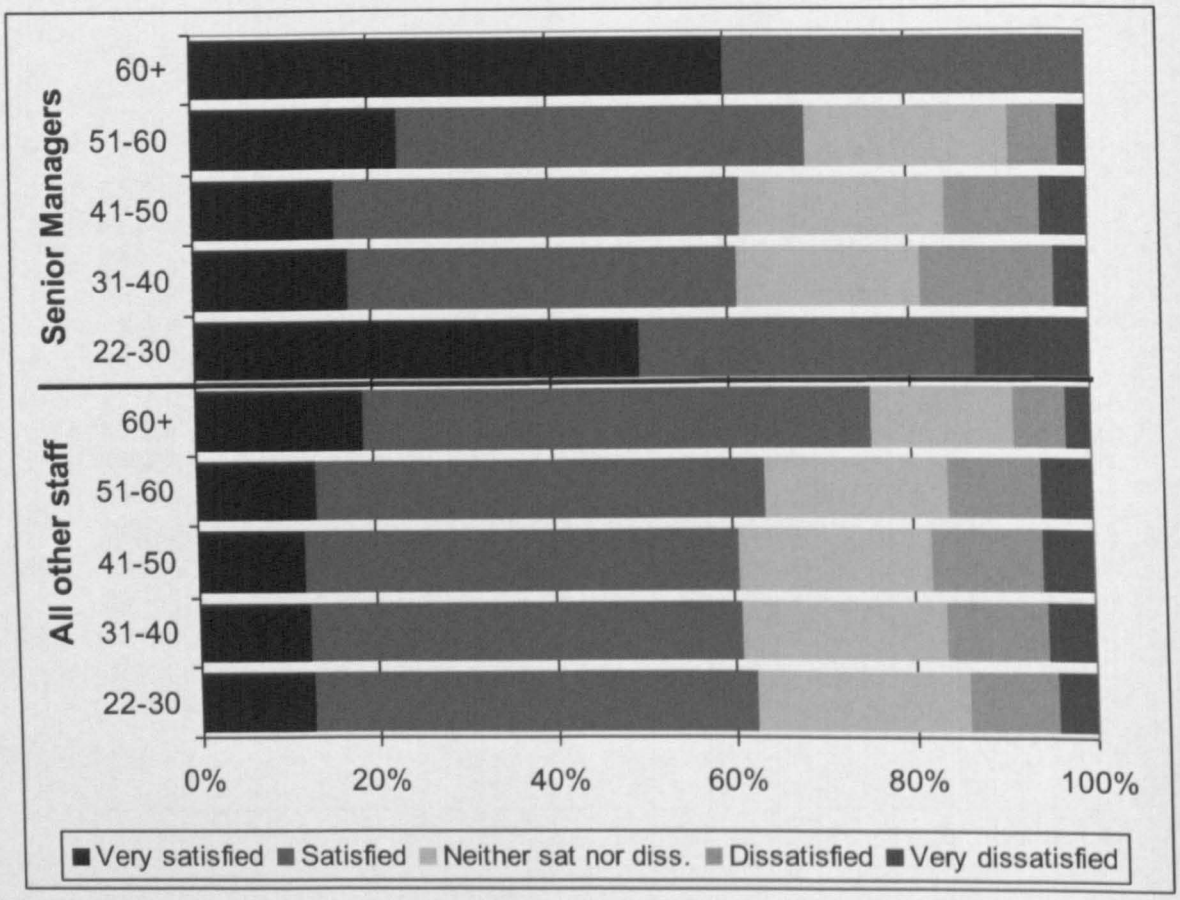
	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	11.9%	37.9%	26.1%	17.1%	7.1%
	31-40	9.3%	38.6%	27.9%	16.6%	7.6%
	41-50	9.9%	38.9%	26.1%	17.4%	7.7%
	51-60	9.8%	42.6%	26.0%	15.2%	6.4%
	60+	12.8%	48.6%	24.8%	10.5%	3.3%
Senior Managers	22-30	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%
	31-40	12.0%	35.2%	31.5%	16.7%	4.6%
	41-50	11.1%	30.6%	38.3%	16.1%	3.9%
	51-60	13.3%	40.0%	36.2%	7.6%	2.9%
	60+	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37 d to Show Satisfaction with Amount of Training Received
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N=22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8d



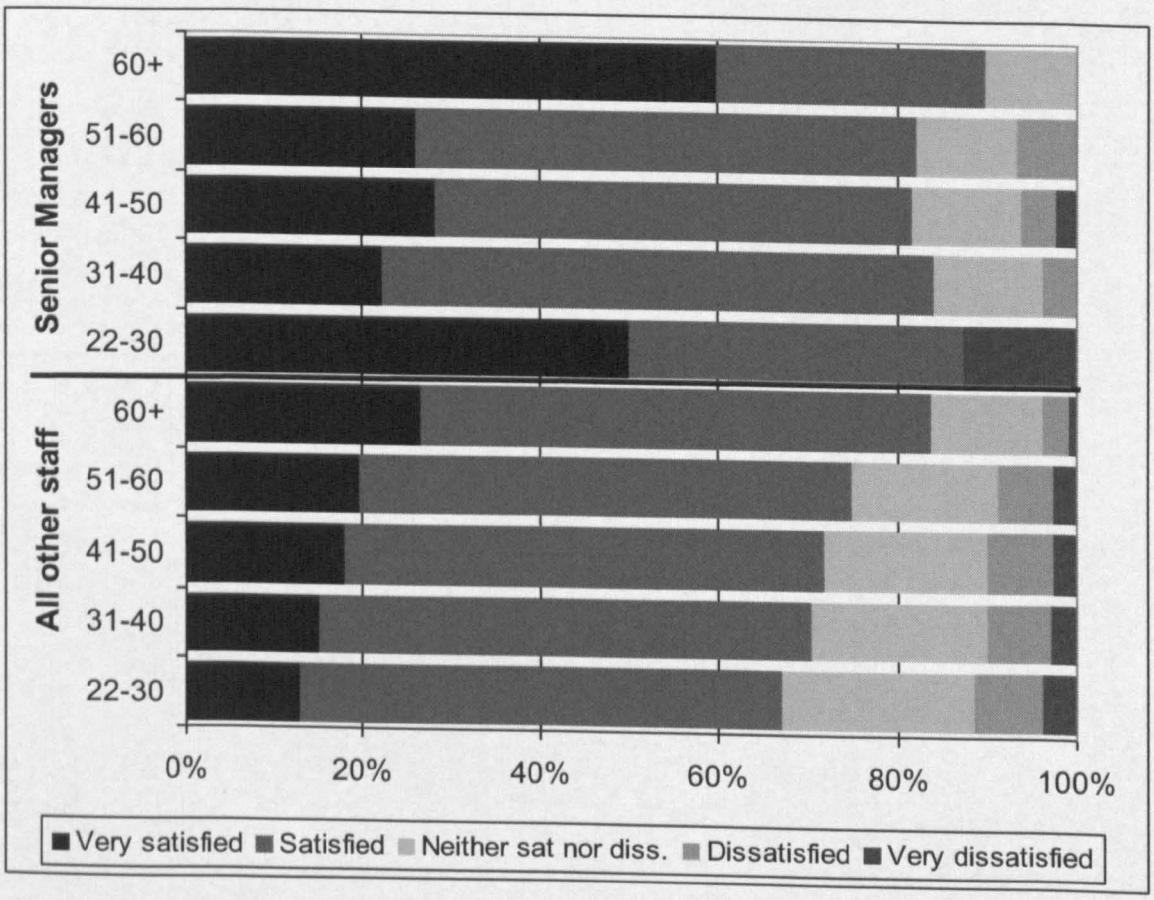
	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	3.5%	28.2%	24.7%	28.1%	15.5%
	31-40	4.0%	32.0%	24.8%	27.3%	11.8%
	41-50	3.7%	31.4%	23.5%	28.1%	13.3%
	51-60	4.1%	29.2%	22.9%	30.0%	13.8%
	60+	7.5%	36.1%	19.5%	26.9%	10.0%
Senior Managers	22-30	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	.0%
	31-40	15.7%	49.1%	20.4%	11.1%	3.7%
	41-50	10.0%	55.6%	18.3%	13.3%	2.8%
	51-60	13.1%	53.3%	20.6%	12.1%	.9%
	60+	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37e to Show Satisfaction with Amount of Pay Received
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N=22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8e



	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	12.7%	49.6%	23.8%	9.9%	4.0%
	31-40	12.4%	48.5%	22.7%	11.2%	5.1%
	41-50	12.0%	48.6%	21.6%	12.2%	5.6%
	51-60	13.4%	50.4%	20.4%	10.2%	5.6%
	60+	18.9%	56.9%	15.7%	5.8%	2.7%
Senior Managers	22-30	50.0%	37.5%	.0%	.0%	12.5%
	31-40	17.6%	43.5%	20.4%	14.8%	3.7%
	41-50	16.1%	45.6%	22.8%	10.6%	5.0%
	51-60	23.4%	45.8%	22.4%	5.6%	2.8%
	60+	60.0%	40.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37 f to Show Satisfaction with Job Security
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N=22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8f



Graph to Show Satisfaction with the Work Itself

	Age Range	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
All Other Staff	22-30	12.9%	54.2%	21.6%	7.5%	3.7%
	31-40	15.1%	55.5%	19.7%	7.1%	2.6%
	41-50	17.9%	54.1%	18.3%	7.3%	2.4%
	51-60	19.6%	55.5%	16.4%	6.1%	2.4%
	60+	26.7%	57.3%	12.3%	2.9%	.8%
Senior Managers	22-30	50.0%	37.5%	.0%	.0%	12.5%
	31-40	22.2%	62.0%	12.0%	3.7%	.0%
	41-50	28.3%	53.3%	12.2%	3.9%	2.2%
	51-60	26.2%	56.1%	11.2%	6.5%	.0%
	60+	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	.0%	.0%

Table 37 g to Show Satisfaction with the Work Itself
Senior Managers N= 416 All other Staff N=22637
Source WERS 2004, Question A8g